

THIS QUARTER

VOLUME 5

1932

KRAUS REPRINT CORPORATION

New York

1967

Printed in U.S.A.

THIS QUARTER

Edited & Published by EDWARD W. TITUS

Vol. V

No. 1

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THIS QUARTER: Published quarterly, 30 Francs, \$1.25 or Five Shillings a copy. 110 Francs a Year in France; \$5.00, One Guinea or 130 Francs in all other countries, post free. Publication, circulation and advertising office at No. 4, Rue Delambre, Montparnasse, Paris, France. Editorial office at No. 8, Rue Delambre, Paris. THIS QUARTER receives manuscripts and art material (line drawings only) on the definite understanding that it assumes no responsibility for loss or damage while in transit or in the Editor's custody. Accepted contributions will be paid for. All material published herein is copyright by the Editor. No manuscript will be returned unless it has been accompanied by International Reply Coupons sufficient to prepay return postage.

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Printed in France.

THIS QUARTER

September

SURREALIST NUMBER
(Guest Editor : André Breton)

EDITORIALLY :

By Way of Introducing This Surrealist Number

For fear of growing *blasé* with encomiums on the quality of the material THIS QUARTER has printed consistently during the three years of the present Editor's incumbency, and—*unconsciously* perhaps—to countervail the risk of imperilling editorial judgement by a long, wearying, vacationless pursuit of an undiminishing standard, even if this standard has been of that worth which generous readers have again and again attributed to it, we were casting about for a passing distraction. We were sighing for a spell, a relief, from that art which an artist always produces "out of his consciousness, and with no other aim than to please." For however roundabout and varying in technical problems, in form, subject-matter and conception, the way of consciously created art may be, and however ingeniously manoeuvred, bandied about in this direction and that, however necessary and logical have been its historical fluctuations, it yet remains traditionally and canonically hidebound and according to programme:—this art, this expression of conscious artistic effort, on which the world has been suckled unintermittently. Yet living man lives unconsciously *as well as* consciously, and the plane of his unconsciousness, we know now, is on the whole vaster than that of his consciousness. The outer waters have been pretty thoroughly navigated. The inner we have no more than caught occasional glimpses of. The vagabondage of the unconscious in art lures us irresistibly the moment the mind turns towards its possibilities.

EDITORIALLY

The well-known Paris daily, *l'Intransigeant*, clinched the matter for us. That journal published recently the result of a sort of symposium on the literary preferences of the collegiate youth of Paris. The signatories of the reply, which came from the *Lycée Louis le Grand*, declared substantially that they had no preferences in literature and that any attachment they might feel towards the works of past writers is such only in so far as those works offer more than literature. They therefore declared themselves adherents to surrealist activity, and to this activity's intellectual implications, as defined by André Breton.

What then is this surrealist activity or surrealism?

Surrealism has been defined before, but whatever it may have been in its swaddling-days, the young men of the *Lycée Louis le Grand* betray a deeper knowledge of its evolution and present-day significance than their elders seem to reveal. If, according to Mr. Wyndham Lewis's recently published thesis (*Doom of Youth*, in reality a very stupid thesis, all dressed up and no place to go), Youth is being dragooned into all sorts of movements for the material benefit of its elders, it can be only because these same elders, who were young once themselves, realize that youth looks deeper and its gaze is more direct. Surrealism, regarded in its early days as merely a new litero-artistic movement, has since enlarged its scope to embrace moral, social and political interests. It is therefore nothing short of misleading for such an authoritative work as the French Philosophical Society's publication, *Vocabulaire Technique et Critique de la Philosophie*,* now to define surrealism in this manner: "A word created by Guillaume Apollinaire, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias, drame surréaliste* (performed 1917, published 1918), and probably an imitation of the word *Supernaturalisme* proposed by Gérard de Nerval. . . . Taken over by André Breton and a whole school of modern literature and art, it is characterized by a contempt for deliberate composition or logical concatenation and by the systematic employment of the unconscious and the irrational, of dreams and morbid states, justifying itself often by psycho-analysis."

Entitled *What is Surrealism?*, a pamphlet in English which appeared in Paris a little while back is similarly un-instructive and misleading.

* Vol. III, *Supplément*, p. 119 (Paris, Alcan, 1932).

EDITORIALLY

Leaving aside surrealism's moral, social, political and philosophical preoccupations and limiting oneself to its "artistic" activity, we attempt this definition: *Surrealism consists of the cultivation and practice of communicating the unconscious by writing, painting, sculpture and other means.*

By way of further elucidation, a quotation from Professor Herbert Read's *The Meaning of Art* (p. 145) may be helpful: "Klee [Paul Klee, the Swiss artist] must be dissociated from all modern art movements, and particularly from such labels as Cubist, Expressionist, or Futurist. He is sometimes claimed by the French group known as *Surréalistes*, * but if there is any question of relationship, it is the *Surréalistes* who derive from Klee, not Klee from the *Surréalistes*. He is the most individualistic of modern artists. Like Chagall, he has created his own world—a world with its own strange flora and fauna, its own laws of perspective and logic—and in this world he lives and has his being." It may be pertinently commented on this that to the extent to which Klee "has created his own world," to that extent he could not derive from the surrealists nor they from him. The cardinal point is here, that the surrealists do not *create* their world, they simply *find* or discover and explore an existing world, the world of the unconscious. Columbus discovered America, but did not create it. If Klee depicts his subliminal world, his work is surrealist. He may be doing this, for all we know, or he may not; in either case Professor Read's conclusion needs revision.

* * *

Owing to the fact that dyed-in-the-wool surrealists have consistently refused to explain themselves in any but their own publications, which circulate chiefly in France and some of which have become exceedingly rare, and that, with some few inadvertent or expedient exceptions, they have declined to contribute to non-surrealist publications in France or elsewhere, their work has been practically inaccessible to English and American readers. After much persuasion, and on condition that an issue of *THIS QUARTER* were exclusively devoted to surrealist work, M. André Breton and his col-

* The reader will not find Klee mentioned in Mr. Breton's exhaustive paper which follows.

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leagues have consented to collaborate in the production of the present surrealist issue, which contains contributions, many now printed for the first time, representative of nearly every aspect of written and pictorial surrealist work.

Unfortunately, we have not the space at our disposal to speak of the influence surrealism has exercised nor of the imitators of the so-called surrealist manner. Any attempt at criticism of surrealist work would be futile, as futile as the criticism of visions or dreams. Their work must be taken as it stands, measurable as it is by no standards that we know. Possessing ourselves not a germ of surrealist proclivities, we may, however, say this, that if, by the evocation of the unconscious or subliminal self, poems are produced such as some of those printed in this issue, the day may come when the need of re-examination of every known definition of art—certainly of the art of poetry at least—will force itself upon us.

We shall not speak of the difficulties experienced in putting the material placed at our disposal into English, but we cannot refrain from singling out Mr. Samuel Beckett's work for special acknowledgement. His rendering of the Eluard and Breton poems in particular is characterizable only in superlatives.

**

A concluding observation must be made in fairness to M. Breton, without which his finely phrased complaint, page 8, that he is not "inclined to over-estimate an opportunity to be heard only in undertones," might be puzzling. M. Breton has told us much in his valuable paper on *Surrealism, Yesterday, To-day and To-Morrow*, but he might, indeed, have told us much more. If there are any gaps apparent in his essay, the fault is ours, not his. It is ours, because, in order to avoid possible embarrassment—embarrassment to ourselves, not to him—we made it clear that we should not mind in the least what he might say in his exposé of surrealism, nor what material he would give us to print in this issue, so long as he eschewed politics and such other topics as might not be in honeyed accord with Anglo-American censorship usages, although entirely permissible in France. He generously agreed, but his happiness was not complete. *Nostra culpa.*

EDWARD W. TITUS.

ANDRÉ BRETON

SURREALISM

Yesterday, To-Day and To-Morrow

At the time of this writing new shivers are running through the intellectual atmosphere: it only needs courage to face them.

COMTE DE LAUTRÉAMONT.

A hundred or so works of prose and verse, fifty issues of reviews, innumerable pamphlets on politics and morals, a thousand or thereabout of paintings and "objects" relating to the dream-world or symbolism, several cinema films, violent controversies, public outbursts that have repeatedly furnished lively news to the daily press—there is the evidence of the varied activity surrealism has been carrying on in France during the last decade.

It is obvious that no more than a summary of that activity, theoretical and practical, can be given here, and the more or less rigorous control to which publications in English are subjected in English-speaking countries obliges us to pass over in silence whatever in that activity bears on social conflicts or morals. Limited, then, as we are in the expression of our deepest convictions on those questions, we are unable

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to describe the surrealist movement here in any way as extensively as it should be described. Neither are we inclined to over-estimate an opportunity to make ourselves heard only in undertones.

Nevertheless, in its philosophic, poetic and artistic aspects surrealism is capable of sufficient definitional demarcation to justify us in seizing the opportunity extended to us by Mr. Edward W. Titus, the Editor and Publisher of *THIS QUARTER*, of explaining it to English and American readers, at any rate, at more effectual length than has been possible hitherto.

The loss resulting to poets and writers of all countries from not knowing and understanding us better cannot be inappreciable. This is not the place to inquire why the commerce of ideas is internationally less free than any other. But bitter enough as this fact is generally, it is aggravated in the present instance by the utter absurdity of not exploiting systematically in terms of closer relationship whatever may be our common possession. If so it be, then, that we all labour under the evil due to the want of authoritative information as to what is being done throughout the world, that in order to gain friends or enemies amongst our contemporaries in other countries, it is to vague and suspect rumour that we are reduced; that the consciousness of physical distance and the handicap of different languages being unavoidable for the conveyance of things essentially the same, deprive us almost entirely of every advantage of timely propinquity and prevent us from sharing with one another, then and there, any impressions that can by confrontation only be identified as those "new shivers" Lautréamont speaks of and that alone augur the life to come—if so it be, then these various obstacles need not, indeed, detain us.

Obviously, such words as "on the other side of the

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Channel," "on the other side of the Atlantic," imply an independence (at best relative only) of culture and aspirations of an ethnic character. But it might well be asked in passing, whether the interests subserved by such independence are not far less respectable than thought,—thought, that is, which has for its unyielding aim the knowledge of man and his universe.

Surrealism, little as it has engaged in a search of antecedents in England, is yet in no way embarrassed to name several outstanding ones. (German literary history also could furnish a number.) They even may astonish my distant readers, who may consider the linking together of such names an adventuresome affair, the history of literature as it is taught not favouring the throwing of great, yet fragile, bridges to span the ages. The names are those of authors whose influence, whether directly or indirectly traceable, we tolerantly take for granted. It is at all events undeniable and kinship with it all the more evident thanks to the fact that before we ourselves virtually yielded to it, it had been fragmentarily manifest in our spiritual and lineally most direct ascendants.

I shall confine myself to naming: Swift who is found complete in Jarry and Vaché; the chief representatives of the "Gothic novel," Walpole of *The Castle of Otranto*, Mrs. Radcliffe (whom Lautréamont calls the "crazy spectre"), Monk Lewis, looming large in Sade's *Idées sur les Romans* and contributing "the indispensable revolutionary impulses" which had begun to agitate the Europe of that time; Maturin, who, having loomed over Borel and Baudelaire, is described by Lautréamont as "the devil's crony" ("Le compère des ténèbres"); not to overlook in the vanguard of such masters of terror that prodigy of verbal orchestration who was Young,

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unquestionably the most authentic forerunner of the surrealist style, whose secret Lautréamont was the first to appropriate : "O nights of Young ! you have given me many a headache !" Finally there is Synge, with his *Playboy of the Western World*, which alone links us with him,—a play whose poetical and moral career is still far from being terminated.

For the sake of at least approximating to completeness, I cannot abstain from pointing out that before surrealist thought had come to a stand in dialectical materialism, having first traversed the entire history of modern thought, it had, in the same manner as it arrived at Marx through Hegel, come to Hegel through Berkeley—with whom it paused rather longer than with the others—and through Hume. These latter influences have this one characteristic of their own that, contrary to the former, and accommodated to those of the French materialists of the xviiiith century, they yielded a residuum of *practical action* to which we assign no more than a passing importance and which we are, in fact, discarding entirely.

My interest in dwelling on them is not dictated alone by a desire to establish between my readers and myself the greatest possible number of—if only fugitive—points of contact. Rather do I wish it to be understood that surrealism has not been drawn up as an abstract system, that is to say, safeguarded against contradiction. As a living movement it has brought together and is still bringing together diverse temperaments individually obeying or resisting a variety of bents. The determinant of their enduring or short-lived adherence is not to be considered as a blind concession to an inert stock of ideas held in common, but as a continuous sequence of acts which, propelling the doer to more or less

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distant points, forces him for each fresh start to return to the same starting-line. These exercises not being without peril, one man may break a limb or—for which there is precedent—his head, another may peaceably submerge himself in a quagmire or report himself dying of fatigue.

Unable as yet to treat itself to an ambulance, surrealism simply leaves these individuals by the way-side. Those who continue in the ranks are aware of course of the casualties left behind them. But what of it? The essential is always to look ahead, to remain sure that one has not forfeited the burning desire for beauty, truth and justice, toilingly to go onward towards the discovery, one by one, of fresh landscapes, and to continue doing so indefinitely and without coercion to the end, that others may afterwards travel the same spiritual road, unhindered and in all security.

Penetration, to be sure, has not been as deep as one would have wished. Poetically speaking, a few wild, or shall we say, charming, beasts whose cries fill the air and bar access to a domain as yet only surmised, are still far from being exorcised. But for all that, the piercing of the thicket would have proceeded less tortuously, and those who are doing the pioneering would have acquitted themselves with unabating tenacity in the service of the cause, if, between the beginning and the end of the spectacle which they provide for themselves and would be glad to provide for others, a change had not taken place.

In 1932, more than ever before, surrealism owes it to itself to defend the postulate of the necessity of change. It is amusing, indeed, to see how the more spiteful and silly of our adversaries affect to triumph whenever they stumble on some old state-

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ment we may have made and which now sounds more or less discordantly in the midst of many others intended to render comprehensible our present conduct. This insidious manœuvre, which is calculated to cast a doubt on our good faith, or at least on the genuineness of our principles, can easily be defeated. The development of surrealism throughout the decade of its existence is, we take it, a function of the unrolling of historical realities as these may be speeded up between the period of relief which follows the conclusion of a peace and the fresh outbreak of war. It is also a function of the process of seeking after new values in order to confirm or invalidate existing ones. Simply that certain of the first participants in surrealist activities have thrown up the sponge and have been discarded has brought about the retiring from circulation of some ways of thinking and the putting into circulation of others in which there were implicit certain general dissents on the one hand and certain general assents on the other. Hence it is that the activities have been fashioned by events.

At the present moment, contrary to current biased rumour according to which surrealism itself is supposed, in its cruelty of disposition, to have sacrificed nearly all the blood first vivifying it, it is heartening to be able to point out that it has never ceased to avail itself of the perfect teamwork of Messrs. René Crevel, Paul Eluard, Max Ernst, Benjamin Péret, Man Ray, Tristan Tzara, and the author of these pages, all of whom can attest that from the inception of the movement—which is also the date of their own enlistment in it—until now, the initial principle of their covenant has never been violated. If there have occurred differences on some point, it was essentially within

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the rhythmic scope of the integral whole, in itself a least disputable element of objective value. The others, those whom we no longer meet, can they say as much? They cannot, for the simple reason that since they separated from us they have been incapable of achieving a single concerted action that had any definite form of its own and they have confined themselves, instead, to a reaction against surrealism with greatest wastage to themselves,—a fate always overtaking those who go back on their past. The history of their apostasy and denials will ultimately be read into the great limbo of human failings, without profit to any observer—ideal yesterday, but real to-day—who, called upon to pronounce himself, will decide whether they or ourselves have brought the more appreciable efforts to bear upon a rational solution of the many problems surrealism has propounded.

**

There is no doubt that before the surrealist movement properly so called, there existed among the promoters of the movement and others who later rallied round it, very active, not merely dissenting, but, unfortunately, antagonistic, dispositions which, between 1915 and 1920, were willing to align themselves under the signboard of *Dada*. Post-war disorder, a state of mind essentially anarchic that guided that cycle's many manifestations, a deliberate refusal to judge—for lack, it was said, of criteria—the actual qualifications of individuals, and, perhaps, in the last analysis, a certain spirit of negation which was making itself conspicuous, had brought about a dissolution of the group as yet inchoate, one might say, by reason of its dispersed and heterogeneous character, a group whose germinating force

has nevertheless been decisive and, by the general consent of present-day critics, has greatly influenced the course of ideas. It may be proper before passing rapidly—as I must—over this period, to apportion the, by far, handsomest share to Marcel Duchamp (canvases and glass objects still to be seen in New York), to Francis Picabia (reviews "291" and "391"), Jacques Vaché (*Lettres de Guerre*) and Tristan Tzara (*25 Poems, Dada Manifesto* 1918).

But, strangely enough, it is round a discovery of language that there was seeking to organize itself in 1920 what—as yet on a basis of confidential exchange—assumed the name of Surrealism, a word fallen from the lips of Apollinaire, which we diverted from the rather general and much confusing connotation he had given it. What was at first no more than a new method of poetic writing broke away after several years from the much too general theses which had come to be expounded in the *Surrealist Manifesto—Soluble Fish*, 1924, the *Second Manifesto* adding others to them, whereby the whole was raised to a vaster ideological plane;—and so there had to be revision.

In an article, *Enter the Mediums*, published in *Littérature*, 1924, reprinted in *Les Pas Perdus*, 1924, and subsequently in the *Surrealist Manifesto*, I explained the circumstance that had originally put us, my friends and myself, on the track of the surrealist activity we still follow and for which we are hopeful of gaining ever more numerous new adherents in order to extend it further than we have so far succeeded in doing. It reads :

It was in 1919, in complete solitude and at the approach of sleep, that my attention was arrested by sentences more or less complete, which became perceptible to my mind without my being able to discover (even by very meticu-

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lous analysis) any possible previous volitional effort. One evening in particular, as I was about to fall asleep, I became aware of a sentence articulated clearly to a point excluding all possibility of alteration and stripped of all quality of vocal sound; a curious sort of sentence which came to me bearing—in sober truth—not a trace of any relation whatever to any incidents I may at that time have been involved in; an insistent sentence, it seemed to me, a sentence I might say, that *knocked at the window*. I was prepared to pay no further attention to it when the organic character of the sentence detained me. I was really bewildered.

Unfortunately, I am unable to remember the exact sentence at this distance, but it ran approximately like this: "A man is cut in half by a window." What made it plainer was the fact that it was accompanied by a feeble visual representation of a man in the process of walking, but cloven, at half his height, by a window perpendicular to the axis of his body. Definitely, there was the form, re-erected against space, of a man leaning out of a window. But the window following the man's locomotion, I understood that I was dealing with an image of great rarity. Instantly the idea came to me to use it as material for poetic construction. I had no sooner invested it with that quality, than it had given place to a succession of all but intermittent sentences which left me no less astonished, but in a state, I would say, of extreme detachment.

Preoccupied as I still was at that time with Freud, and familiar with his methods of investigation which I had practised occasionally upon the sick during the War, I resolved to obtain from myself what one seeks to obtain from patients, namely a monologue poured out as rapidly as possible, over which the subject's critical sense claims no share—the subject himself throwing reticence to the winds—and which as much as possible represents *spoken thought*. It seemed and it still seems to me—and the manner in which the sentence of the cloven man had come to me would bear this out—that the thought's speed is not greater than the word's, and hence challenges the current of neither tongue nor pen. It was in those circumstances that, together with Philippe Soupault, to whom I communicated my first inferences, I set about to bescribble paper, feeling praiseworthy contempt for whatever the literary result might turn out to be. The ease of achievement accom-

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plished the rest. At the end of the first day we were in a position to read to one another about fifty pages obtained in that manner and to compare the results we had achieved.

The analogy was on the whole remarkable. There were similar vices of construction, the same faltering manner and, also, on his side and mine, an illusion of extraordinary verve, much emotion, a considerable assortment of images of quality a single one of which we should have been incapable of producing deliberately in the ordinary way,—a very rare pictorial effect and, here and there, some bits of rampant buffoonery. The only difference our respective texts revealed appeared to be due essentially to our particular tempers, Soupault's being less static than mine, and due also to the mistake he had made of scattering about at the top of some pages—doubtless in a spirit of mystification—various words under the guise of captions. I must, on the other hand, give him credit for always opposing—and forcibly opposing—any attempt at revision or correction of passages that seemed to me not altogether to the manner born. Wherein, to be sure, he had reason on his side.

It is, of course, difficult in these cases to appreciate at their just value the various elements in the result obtained; one may even say that it is entirely impossible to appreciate them at a first reading. To you who may be writing them, these elements are, in appearance, *as strange as to any one else* and you are yourself naturally distrustful of them. Poetically speaking, they are distinguished chiefly by a very high degree of *immediate absurdity*, the peculiar quality of that absurdity being, on close examination, their yielding to whatever is admissible and legitimate in the world: divulgation of a given number of facts and properties on the whole not less objectionable than others.

The word "surrealism" having thereupon become descriptive of the *generalizable* undertaking to which we had devoted ourselves, I thought it indispensable, in 1924, to define this word once and for all:

SURREALISM, subst.; Pure psychic automatism, by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing or by other means, the real process of thought. It is thought's dictation, all exercise of reason and every aesthetic or moral preoccupation being absent.

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Encyclopaedically, it may be said that surrealism rests on belief in the higher reality of certain forms of association hitherto neglected; in the omnipotence of dreaming, in the unbiased play of thought. It tends to the ultimate destruction of all other psychic mechanisms and to be substituted for them in the resolution of life's chief problems. Have professed absolute surrealism: Messrs. Aragon, Baron, Boiffard, Breton, Carrive, Crevel, Delteil, Desnos, Eluard, Gérard, Limbour, Malkine, Morise, Naville, Noll, Péret, Picon, Soupault, Vitrac.

These, till now, appear to be the only ones, and there would not have been any doubt on that score, were it not for the strange case of Isidore Ducasse of whose extra-literary career I lack all data. Were one to consider their output only superficially, a goodly number of poets might well have passed for surrealists, beginning with Dante and Shakespeare at his best. *In the course of many attempts I have made towards an analysis of what, under false pretences, is called genius, I have found nothing that could in the end be attributed to any other process than this.*

Young's *Night Thoughts* is surrealist from cover to cover. It was unfortunately a priest who spoke; a bad priest, to be sure, yet a priest.

HERACLITUS is surrealist in dialectic
ALBERTUS MAGNUS is surrealist in the automaton
LULLE in definition
FLAMEL in the night of gold
UCELLO in the free for all fight
RADCLIFFE in the landscape
CARRIÈRE in drowning
MONK LEWIS in beauty of evil
MATURIN in despair
ARNIM an out and out surrealist and chiefly in time and space
NERVAL in allegory
BOREL in liberty
FORNERET in the maxim

HERVEY SAINT-DENYS in the directed dream
CROS in the mirror of the ear
CARROLL in nonsense
GUSTAVE MOREAU in fascination
HUYSMANS in pessimism
ALLAIS in mystification
HELEN SMITH in the tongue
PICASSO in Cubism
CRAVAN in the challenge
CHIRICO in the effigy
DUCHAMP in games
MAC SENNETT in movement
The Postman CHEVAL in architecture*

They were not always surrealists—on this I insist—in the sense that I can disentangle in each of them a number of

* This list is supplementary to the one published in 1924, which is at the bottom of the following page.

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preconceived notions to which—very naïvely!—they clung. And they clung to them so, because they had not heard the *surrealist voice*, the voice that exhorts on the eve of death and in the roaring storm, and because they were unwilling to dedicate themselves to the task of no more than orchestrating the score replete with marvellous things. They were proud instruments themselves; hence the sounds they produced were not always harmonious sounds.

We, on the contrary, who have not given ourselves to processes of filtering, who through the medium of our work were content to be the silent receptacle of many echos, modest *registering machines* which the pattern they trace is incapable of hypnotizing, we, perhaps, are serving a much nobler cause. So we honestly render back the “talent” entrusted to us. As well may you prate of the “talent” of yards of platinum, of this looking-glass, of this gate, this sky, if you will.

We have no talents....

The *Manifesto* contained a number of practical receipts under the caption : “Secrets of the Magic Surrealist Art,” such as the following :

Written Surrealist Composition or First and Last Draft

Having settled down in some spot most conducive to the mind’s concentration upon itself, order writing material to be brought you. Let your state of mind be as passive and receptive as possible. Forget your genius, talents, as well as the genius and talents of others. Repeat to yourself that literature is pretty well the sorriest road that leads to everywhere. Write quickly without any previously chosen subject, quickly enough not to dwell on, and not to be tempted to

SWIFT is surrealist in malice	RIMBAUD in life and elsewhere
SADE in sadism	MALLARMÉ in confidence
CHATEAUBRIAND in exotism	JARRY in absinthe
CONSTANT in politics	NOUVEAU in the kiss
HUGO is surrealist when he is not silly	SAINT-POL ROUX in the symbol
DESBORDES-VALMORE in love	FARGUE in the atmosphere
BERTRAND in the past	VACHÉ in me
RABBE in death	REVERDY concerning his home
POE in adventure	ROUSSEL is surrealist in the anecdote, &c., &c.
BAUDELAIRE in morals	

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read over, what you have written. The first sentence will come of itself; and this is self-evidently true because there is never a moment but some sentence alien to our conscious thought clamours for outward expression. It is rather difficult to speak of the sentence to follow, since it doubtless comes in for a share of our conscious activity and so the other sentences, if it is conceded that the writing of the first sentence must have involved even a minimum of consciousness. But that should in the long run matter little, because therein precisely lies the greatest interest in the surrealist exercise. Punctuation of course necessarily hinders the stream of absolute continuity which preoccupies us. But you should particularly distrust the prompting whisper. If through a fault ever so trifling there is a forewarning of silence to come, a fault, let us say, of *inattention*, break off unhesitatingly the line that has become too lucid. After the word whose origin seems suspect you should place a letter, any letter, *l* for example, always the letter *l*, and restore the arbitrary flux by making that letter the initial of the word to follow.

I shall pass over the more or less correlated considerations, which the *Manifesto* discussed, in their bearing on the possibilities of plastic expression in surrealism. These considerations did not assume with me a relativily dogmatic turn until later (*Surrealism and Painting*, 1928).

I believe that the real interest of that book—there were indeed not lacking such as were good enough to concede interest for which no particular credit is due to me because I have no more than given expression to sentiments shared with friends, present and former—rests only subordinately on the formula above given. It is rather confirmatory of a *turn of thought* which, for good or ill, is peculiarly distinctive of our time. The defence originally attempted of that turn of thought still seems valid to me in what follows :

We shall not allow the fear of going mad to make us keep the banner of imagination at half-mast.

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It is desirable to contrast the realist attitude with the materialist.* The latter is really more poetical than the former and implies pride, perhaps monstrous pride, but not a new and more complete failure. Above all one can interpret it as a happy reaction from the several ridiculous spiritualistic tendencies. It is not, at all events, incompatible with a certain loftiness of thought.

The realist attitude, on the contrary, inspired as it has been by positivism from St. Thomas down to Anatole France, seems to me antagonistic to all intellectual and moral loftiness. I have a horror of it because it is made up of mediocrity, hatred and flat self-sufficiency. It is the attitude which produces to-day the ridiculous books and the plays that are such an affront. It is being incessantly supported by the press and it is a hindrance to science and art in that it is giving itself up to flattering opinion in the latter's lowest of tastes : clarity bordering on moronism, a dog's life. The best minds are feeling the effects of it; the law of least resistance is showing its influence on them as on others. The charming result of such a state of things in literature, for instance, is the super-abundance of novels. Each tries his hand at a bit of "observation." By way of a much needed house-cleaning, M. Paul Valéry recently suggested the compilation of an anthology of the greatest possible number of openings in novels, which, he thought, would yield not a little idiocy. The most famous authors were to be drawn upon. The idea does honour to M. Valéry, who assured me at one time that, on this point of the novel, he would always refuse to write : "The marchioness left the house at five o'clock." But has he kept his word ?

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We still live under the dominion of logic. But the methods of logic are now applied only to problems of secondary interest. The absolute rationalism which is still the fashion permits the consideration of such facts only as are closely related to our experience. Logical ends, on the other hand, escape us. Needless to add that experience itself has had limits assigned to it. It revolves in a cage from which

* I may have been wrong then not to have specified : mechanistically or primarily materialist.

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it becomes more and more difficult to release it. Experience—it also—leans on what is of immediate usefulness, and common sense is its keeper. Under colour of civilization, under pretext of progress, all that rightly or wrongly may come under the head of superstition or fantasy has been swept from the mind, all uncustomary searching after truth proscribed. Seemingly it was only by the sheerest hasard that there came to light an aspect of psychic life, the most important one in my opinion, with which, it was supposed, the world no longer had any concern. It is to Freud's discoveries that the credit must be given. Based on his investigations, a current of opinion is revealing itself that will enable the explorer of the human mind to extend his researches, justified as he shall be henceforth in taking into account not summary realities alone. Perhaps imagination is now on the point of coming into its own again. If the depths of our mind harbour strange forces capable of increasing the forces already known or of successfully contending with them, that would indeed seem to be inducement enough to harness them, to harness them first in order to bring them later, if necessary, under the sway of reason. The analysts would themselves prove the gainers by it. It should be noted, however, that there are no *a priori* means available for the operation of such an enterprise, that, at least for the present, it might just as well be considered as within the competence of poets as well as scientists, and that success may be won independently of the more or less capricious methods employed.

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I am resolved to render powerless that *hated of the marvellous* which is so rampant among certain people, that ridicule to which they are so eager to expose it. Briefly: The marvellous is always beautiful, anything that is marvellous is beautiful; indeed, nothing but the marvellous is beautiful.

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The admirable thing about the fantastic is that it is no longer fantastic: there is only the real.

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Interesting in a different way from the future of surrealist *technics* (theatrical, philosophical, scientific, critical)

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appears to me the application of surrealism to action. Whatever reservations I might be inclined to make with regard to responsibility in general, I should quite particularly like to know how will be *adjudicated* the first misdemeanours whose surrealist character is indubitable. When surrealist methods extend from writing to action, there will certainly arise the need of a new morality to take the place of the current one, the cause of all evil.

The *Manifesto of Surrealism* has improved on the Rimbaud principle that the poet must turn seer. Man in general is going to be summoned to manifest through life those *new sentiments* which the gift of vision will so suddenly have placed within his reach:

Surrealism, as I see it, displays our complete *nonconformity* so clearly that there can be no question of citing it as a witness on the other side when the real world comes to be arraigned. On the contrary, it cannot but testify to the complete state of distraction to which we certainly hope to attain here below.

Surrealism then was securing expression in all its purity and force. The freedom it possesses is a perfect freedom in the sense that it recognizes no limitations exterior to itself. As it was said on the cover of the first issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste*, "it will be necessary to draw up a new declaration of the Rights of Man." The concept of *surreality*, concerning which quarrels have been sought with us repeatedly and which it was attempted to turn into a metaphysical or mystic rope to be placed afterwards round our necks, lends itself no longer to misconstruction, nowhere does it declare itself opposed to the need of transforming the world which henceforth will more and more definitely yield to it :

I believe in the future transmutation of those two seemingly contradictory states, dream and reality, into a sort of absolute reality, of *surreality*, so to speak. I am looking

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forward to its consummation, certain that I shall never share in it, but death would matter little to me could I but taste some of the joy it will yield ultimately. (*Manifesto of Surrealism.*)

“The real,” it should be understood, “is a relation like any other; the essence of things is by no means linked to their reality, there are other relations besides reality, which the mind is capable of grasping, and which also are primary like chance, illusion, the fantastic, the dream. These various groups are united and brought into harmony in one single order, surreality.... This surreality—a relation in which all notions are merged together—is the common horizon of religions, magics, poetry, intoxications, and of all life that is lowly,—that trembling honeysuckle you deem sufficient to populate heaven.” (Louis Aragon, *Une Vague de Rêve*, 1924.)

“The poet... does not put the wild animals to sleep in order to play the tamer, but, the cages wide open, the keys thrown to the winds, he journeys forth, a traveller who thinks not of himself, but of the voyage, of dream-beaches, forests of hands, soul-endowed animals, all undeniable surreality.” (René Crevel, *L’Esprit contre la Raison.*)

“All that I love, all that I think and feel inclines me towards a particular philosophy of immanence according to which surreality will reside in reality itself, will be neither superior nor exterior to it. And conversely, because the container shall be also the contained.”* “That is to say, I resist with all my strength temptations which, in painting and literature, might have the immediate tendency to withdraw thought from life as well as place life under the aegis of thought.” (*Le Surréalisme et la Peinture*, 1928.)

After years of endeavour and perplexities, when a variety of opinions had disputed amongst themselves the direction of the craft, in which a number of persons of ability and of different *destiny* had originally embarked together, the surrealist idea, it

* *Les Vases communicants*, 1932.

will be seen, recovered in the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* all the brilliancy of which events had vainly conspired to despoil it. I must be brief in telling the story of those bickerings to which surrealism has never ceased to be exposed. They testify to the liveliness of the struggle between the will of those who would maintain surrealism on a purely speculative level and treasonably transfer it on to an artistic and literary plane (Artand, Desnos, Ribémont-Dessaignes, Vitrac), and the will of others who would place it on a practical basis, available at any moment to be sacrificed to an ill-conceived political militancy (Naville, and, recently, Aragon). Nor were those stirring days unfruitful of publications in which the vital principles of surrealism were amply accounted for.

It suffices to recall particularly *Le Paysan de Paris* and *Traité du Style* by Aragon, *L'Esprit contre La Raison*, and *Etes-vous fous?* by René Crevel, *Deuil pour Deuil* by Desnos, *Capitale de la Douleur* and *L'Amour la Poésie* by Eluard, *La Femme 100 têtes* by Ernst, *La Révolution et les Intellectuels* by Naville, *Le Grand Jeu* by Péret, and finally, perhaps my own *Nadja*. The poetic activity of Tzara (*De nos Oiseaux*), although claiming till 1930 no connexion with surrealism, is in perfect accord with ours.

Pierre Naville wrote in 1927: "Surrealism is at the cross-roads of several thought movements. We assume that it affirms the possibility of a certain steady downward readjustment of the mind's rational (and not simply conscious) activity towards more absolutely *coherent* thought, irrespective of whatever direction that thought may take; that is to say, that it proposes or would at least like to propose a new solution of all problems, but chiefly moral." It is, indeed, in that sense that it is epoch-making.

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That is why one may express the essential characteristic of surrealism by saying that "it seeks to calculate the quotient of the unconscious by the conscious." It should be pointed out that in a number of declarations (*La Révolution et les Intellectuels*), this same author demonstrated the utter vanity of intellectual bickerings in the face of the human exploitation which results from the wage-earning system. These declarations gave rise amongst us to considerable anxiety and, attempting for the first time to justify surrealism's social implication, I desired to put an end to it in *Légitime Défense*, 1927 :

We have always said and we still maintain that the emancipation of style, well enough realizable in bourgeois society, could never be accomplished by mere laboratory work relating to words only in the abstract. In this matter as in any other, it seems to us that revolt alone is creative and that is why we believe that all cases for revolt are good cases. The most beautiful verses of Hugo are those of the implacable enemy of oppression. Borel, in a portrait illustrating one of his books, is depicted holding a dagger. Rabbe felt himself to be a "supernumerary of life." Beauchaire cursed God and Rimbaud had his fill of the world. Therein alone lies their work's salvation. For the sake of the good in it we forgive them the bad. But as to our permitting any one at this time to inflict on us exercises resembling that work outwardly, but in reality offering no similar equivalent in *substance*, no. The realization of an existing necessity alone is revolutionary. It cannot, therefore, be said that a work is essentially revolutionary when it is not such in its kernel.

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All we can claim to know is that we are endowed with the gift of speech up to a point, and that through speech something great and obscure is imperiously seeking to express itself; that each one of us has been chosen and appointed, alone of all others, to formulate what in our own day cries for formulation. It is a definite command which once received there remains no time to discuss. It may be even—and that would seem paradoxical—that what we are

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saying is not one of the most essential things to be said and that there may be a better way of saying it for all eternity. So to write, to write so beset, not in order to persuade and—in the usual sense of the word—not in order to live, but, as it seems, to attain one's utmost moral sufficiency in obedience to some singular persistent appeal, so to write is neither play nor make-believe, as far as I know. Perhaps we are only charged with the liquidation of some spiritual inheritance which it is in every one's interest to repudiate, and that is all.

I must admit that in what is said here a certain hesitancy is transparent which betrays an instability in former surrealist sentiment, an instability resulting from the existence side by side in our midst of individual elements that have more or less openly ranged themselves in opposition to one another and whose intentions have, in the last analysis, not always appeared as irreproachable, nor whose motives as lofty, as one may have wished. An important part of the *Second Manifesto* was devoted to a statement of the reasons which moved surrealism to dispense for the future with certain collaborators and a thorough tidying-up of surrealist ideas was attempted :

Whatever may have been the controversial issues raised by former or present followers of surrealism, all will admit that the drift of surrealism has always and chiefly been towards a general and emphatic *crisis in consciousness* and that it is only when this is in being or is shown to be impossible that the success or historic eclipse of the movement will be decided.

Intellectually it was and still is a question of exposing by every available means, and to learn at all price to identify, the factitious character of the conflicts hypocritically calculated to hinder the setting on foot of any unusual agitation to give mankind were it only a faint understanding of its latent possibilities and to inspire it to free itself from its fetters by the available means. The horror of death, the pantomime of the beyond, the total breakdown of the most beautiful intellect in dream, the towers of Babel, the mirror of inconstan-

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cies, the insuperable silver-splashed wall of the brain, all these startling images of human catastrophes, are perhaps nothing but images after all.

There is a hint in all this of belief that there exists a certain spiritual plane on which life and death, the real and imaginary, the past and the future, the communicable and incommunicable, the high and the low, are not conceived of as opposites. It would therefore be vain to attribute to surrealism any other motive than the hope to determine that plane, as it would be absurd to ascribe to it a purely destructive or constructive character: the point at issue being precisely this, that construction and destruction should no longer be flaunted against one another. It becomes clear also that surrealism is not at all interested in taking into account what passes alongside it under the guise of art and is in fact anti-art, philosophy or anti-philosophy, all, in a word, that has not for its ultimate end the conversion of the being into a jewel, internal and unseeing, with a soul which is neither of ice nor of fire. What, indeed, do they expect of surrealism who are still anxious about the position they may occupy *in the world*? On that mental plane from which one may for oneself alone embark on the perilous, but, we think, supreme exploit, on that plane, the footfalls of those who come or go are no longer of any importance, because their echo will be repeated in a land in which, by delimitation, surrealism possesses no listening ear. It is not desirable that surrealism should be dependent on the whim of this or that person. If it declares itself capable of ransoming thought from a serfdom more and more task-driven, to bring it back again to the path of complete understanding, to restore it to its pristine purity, it is indeed no more than right that it should be judged only by what it has done and by what it still has to accomplish in the fulfilment of its promise.

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And may the devil once more preserve the surrealist idea as every other idea tending towards concretion of form, towards the completest possible subordination to the order of fact, as love tends to the creation of a being, the idea of a revolution to the advent of a day of revolt, for otherwise their existence would have no reason whatever. Let the

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reader remember that the idea of surrealism leads to the complete recovery of our psychic endowment thanks to which there will be nothing but the dizzy descent to within ourselves, the flooding with light of our secret places and the gradual blotting out of the others: a perpetual sauntering through wide spaces hitherto out of bounds. Let him remember that the surrealist preoccupation is running no serious risk of extinction so long as man shall continue capable of distinguishing an animal from an up-rising flame or stone. May the devil preserve, I say, the surrealist idea from making headway without encountering misadventure. It is most essential we should carry ourselves as though we were really "in the world" in order to dare afterwards to formulate reservations....

I am uncertain whether or not it is worth while replying here to the puerile objections of those who, though ready to allow that surrealism may eventually triumph in that domain where it was first applied, the domain of poetry, yet view with misgiving its taking sides in the political arena, since in that arena, according to them, it has everything to lose. Either those who voice such objections are lazy or they are expressing deviously a desire to limit our scope. In our opinion, there can be no going back on what Hegel has once and for all laid down: "In the moral sphere—i.e. in the moral sphere as distinguished from the social sphere—there is only formal conviction, and if we mention true conviction it is in order to show how different it is from the other, and to prevent the confusion which would follow if conviction as it is here, i.e. formal conviction, were considered as true conviction, when, to begin with, the latter occurs only in social life." * The pretensions of this "formal conviction" have long since been exposed, and our contemporaries' attempt to restrict us to it at all costs does not redound either to their honour, their intelligence, or their good faith. Since Hegel, any ideological system which is not immediately to collapse has had to bridge the gap threatened for thought itself by the notion of the will as acting in its sole behalf and ever led to reflect upon itself. If I remind my readers that *integrity*, in the Hegelian sense of the word, must be a function of the subjective life's penetrability by the "substantial" life, and that this notion has encountered no fun-

* Hegel, *Philosophie des Rechts*.

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damental objection from minds as different from each other as Feuerbach (who ended by denying that consciousness was a distinct faculty), as Marx (who was entirely taken up with the need of transforming from top to bottom the external conditions of social life), as von Hartmann (who employed an ultra-pessimistic theory of the unconscious for a fresh and optimistic assertion of our will-to-live), and as Freud (who insists more and more on the competence of the super-ego), to whatever divergences these minds may otherwise have been led, no one, I think, can be surprised if surrealism should—as it proceeds forward—engage in more than the solving of a psychological problem, however interesting that problem may be. It is in view of how the world has been driven to recognize this necessity expressed by Hegel that I consider we are compelled most urgently to take up the problem of the social system under which we live, i.e. the problem whether this system is to be accepted or is not to be accepted. It is also because the world has been driven to recognize the necessity in question that it is more than allowable for me, in passing, to arraign those turn-coats from surrealism for whom what I am maintaining in these pages is either too difficult or too lofty. Whatever they may do, with whatever cries of pseudo-joy they may accompany their own retreat, whatever the gross disappointment they may have in store for us—and not they only, but all those for whom one political system is as good as another “since, under whatever one, man will be crushed”—they cannot make me forget that the enjoyment of that supreme “irony” which applies to all things, *and also to political systems*, falls not to them, but, I trust, to me, and to them it will be denied, for it lies beyond, though also presupposing, the whole voluntary act which consists in describing the cycle “*of hypocrisy, of probabilism, of the will which wills the good, and of conviction.*” *

While surrealism undertakes particularly the critical investigation of the notions of reality and unreality, of reason and unreason, of reflection and impulse, of knowing and “fatal” ignorance, of utility and uselessness, there is nevertheless between it and Historical Materialism this similarity in tendency, that it sets out from the “colossal abor-

* Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit.*

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tion " of the Hegelian system. I do not see how limits, those for instance of the economic framework, can be assigned to the exercise of a thought which is definitely adapted to negation and the negation of negation. How allow that the dialectical method is only to be applied validly to solving social problems ? It is the whole of surrealism's ambition to supply this method with nowise conflicting possibilities of application in the most immediate conscious domain. I really cannot see, *pace* a few muddle-headed revolutionaries, why we should abstain from taking up the problems of love, of dreaming, of madness, of art and of religion, so long as we consider these problems from the same angle as they, and we too, consider Revolution. And I have no hesitation in saying that nothing systematic had been done in this direction before surrealism, and for us also at the point where we found it, " the dialectical method in its Hegelian form could not be put into application." For us also it was imperative to have done with idealism proper, and our coining of the word " surrealism " is enough to show that this was so, as it is to show the need for us, to use Engels' example, of going beyond the childish development: " The rose is a rose. The rose is not a rose. And yet the rose is a rose. " Nevertheless—if I may say so parenthetically—we had to set " the rose " in a profitable movement of less innocuous contradictions, a movement in which the rose is successively the rose out of the garden, the rose which holds a singular place in a dream, the rose which it is impossible to abstract from " the optical bouquet," the rose which may change its properties completely by passing into automatic writing, the rose which retains only what the painter has allowed it to retain of a rose in a surrealist painting, and finally the rose, quite different from itself, which goes back to the garden. That is a long way from any idealist standpoint, and we should not disclaim an idealist view if we were not continuing to suffer the attacks of an elementary materialism. These attacks emanate from those who, out of low conservatism, oppose the investigation of the relation of thought to matter, and those who, through ill-digested revolutionary sectarianism, and while ignoring the whole of what is being asked of them, confuse this materialism with the materialism which Engels distinguished as essentially different from it and defined as being foremost an *intuition of the world* which had to put itself to the test and be realized. " In the course

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of the development of philosophy idealism became untenable and was contradicted by modern materialism. The latter is the negation of negation and is not simply the old materialism restored: to the enduring foundations of this old materialism it adds the whole of what has been thought in philosophy and natural science throughout an evolution of two thousand years, and adds too the product of this long history itself."

It is also essential to the proper appreciation of our starting-point to understand that we regard philosophy as *outclassed*. In this, we are, I believe, at one with all those for whom reality has more than a theoretical importance, for whom it is a question of life and death to appeal passionately, as Feuerbach insisted, to this reality: *we* so appeal by committing ourselves *entirely*, without reservation, to the principle of historical materialism; *he* so appealed by casting in the face of the astounded intellectual world the idea that "man is what he eats" and that there would be better prospects of success for a future revolution if the people were better fed, specifically if they were given peas instead of potatoes.

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It was to be expected that surrealism should make its appearance in the midst of, and perhaps thanks to, an uninterrupted succession of falterings, zig-zags and defections, which constantly exact the rediscussion of its original data; i.e. it is called back to the initial principle of its activity and at the same time is subject to the interrogation of the *chancy morrow* when the heart's feeling may have waxed or waned. I have to admit that everything has not been done to bring this undertaking off, if only that we have not taken full advantage of the means which have been defined for our group nor fully tested the ways of investigation recommended when the movement was born. The problem of social action is—as I have already said and as I insist—only one form of a more general problem which surrealism finds it is its duty to raise, and this problem is *the problem of human expression in all its forms*. Whoever says "expression" says, to begin with, "language." It is not therefore surprising that in the beginning surrealism should have confined itself almost entirely to the plane of

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language, nor that it should, after some incursion or other, return to that plane as if for the pleasure of behaving there in a conquered land. Nothing, indeed, can prevent the land from being to a great extent conquered. The hordes of words which were literally unleashed and to which Dada and surrealism deliberately opened their doors, are not, whatever one thinks, words which withdraw vainly. They will penetrate, at leisure, but certainly, the idiotic little towns of that literature which is still taught and, easily failing to distinguish between low and lofty quarterings, they will capture a fine number of turrets. In the belief that poetry alone so far is all that has been seriously shaken by us, the inhabitants are not really on their guard : they are building here and there a few unimportant ramparts. There is a pretence that it has not been noticed how much the logical mechanism of the sentence is proving more and more impotent by itself to give man the emotive shock which really gives some value to his life. On the other hand, the productions of that spontaneous or *more* spontaneous, direct or *more* direct, activity, such as surrealism is providing in ever greater numbers in the form of books, pictures and films—these which man at first looked upon with amazement, he is now placing about the home and it is to them that, more or less timorously, he is committing the task of revolutionizing his ways of feeling. No doubt when I say “man,” that man is not Everyman, and he must be allowed “time” to become Everyman. But note how admirably and perversely insinuating a small number of quite modern works have already proved, those precisely of which the least to be said is that they are pervaded by an especially unhealthy atmosphere : Baudelaire, Rimbaud (despite the reservations I have made), Huysmans, and Lautréamont—to mention only poetry. Do not let us be afraid of making a law unto ourselves of this unhealthiness. We want it to be impossible to say that we have not done everything to annihilate that foolish illusion of happiness and *good understanding* which it will be the glory of the nineteenth century to have exposed. Truly we have not ceased to be fanatically attracted by these rays of sunshine full of miasma. But at this moment, when the public authorities in France are preparing a grotesque celebration of the centenary of Romanticism, we for our part say that this Romanticism—of which we are quite ready to appear historically to-day as the tail,

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though in that case *an excessively prehensile tail*—this Romanticism is, we say, in its very essence in 1930 the negation of these authorities and this celebration; we say, that for Romanticism to be a hundred years old is for it to be young and that what has been wrongly called its heroic period can no longer pass for anything but the pulings of a being who is only now beginning to make known its wants through us; and finally we say, that if it should be held that all that was thought before this infant—all that was thought “classically”—was good, then incontestably he is out for *the whole of evil*.

These considerations preface the critical examination of the changes and alterations which the most typical forms of surrealist expression have undergone in the course of time. This has been, as it happens, nothing less than *a rallying back to principles*:

It is, as I was beginning to say above, regrettable that more systematic and more sustained efforts, such as surrealism has constantly called for, have not been supplied in the way of automatic writing and of accounts of dreams. In spite of the way in which we have insistently included material of this sort in surrealist publications, and the remarkable place they occupy in certain works, it has to be admitted that sometimes their interest in such a context has been slight, or that they rather give the effect of being “bravura pieces.” The presence in these items of an evident pattern has also greatly hampered the species of conversion we had hoped to bring about through them. The excessive negligence of which most of their authors were guilty is to blame: generally these authors were content to let their pens run over the paper without observing in the least what was at the time going on inside themselves—this duplication being nevertheless easier to seize and more interesting to consider than that of reflective writing—, or else they put together more or less arbitrary dream-elements intended to set forth their picturesqueness rather than to make visible usefully how they had come about. Such distortion of course nullifies any benefit that might be obtained from this sort of operation. Indeed, the great value of these operations for surrealism lies in the possibility they have of yielding to the reader

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particular logical planes, precisely those in which the logical faculty which is exercised in everything and for everything in consciousness, does not act. What am I saying ! Not only do these logical planes remain unexplored, but, further, we remain as little informed as ever regarding the origin of the *voice* which it is open to each one to hear, and which in most singular fashion talks to us of something different from what we believe we are thinking, sometimes becoming solemn when we are most light-hearted, or talking nonsense when we are wretched. For that matter, this voice does not resort to these simple contradictions. As I am sitting at my desk, it talks to me of a man who is coming out of a ditch, but it does not tell me of course who he is. If I insist, the voice describes him to me fairly closely. No, certainly, I do not know the man. I note this, and already the man is lost. *I am listening*, I am far from the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism*. "There must not be too many examples": that is the voice speaking.... "Because examples drink...." Yes, I know, I cannot understand either. The important thing would be to know how far this voice is entitled, for instance, to pick me up, as in saying : "There must not be too many examples" (and *Les Chants de Maldoror* has made it evident how remarkably acute the voice can be in critical intervention). When the voice answers me that examples drink (?), is it a way for the power which is using the voice to be evasive, and in that case why is the power evasive ? Was the power going to make itself clear at the very moment I hastened to surprise, without seizing, it ? Such a problem is not only of surrealist interest. Nobody expressing himself does more than take advantage of a very obscure possibility of conciliation between what he knew he had to say and what on the same subject he didn't know he had to say and yet has said. The most rigorous line of thought is unable to forgo this assistance, undesirable though it yet is from the point of view of rigour. Truly, the idea gets torpedoed in the heart of the sentence enunciating it, even when this sentence escapes having any charming liberty taken with its meaning. Dadaism aimed especially at calling attention to the torpedoing. By appealing to automatism, as is well known, surrealism set out to prevent the torpedoing of some vessel or other: something like a phantom-ship (it has

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been tried to make use of this image against me, but hard-worn as it may be, I find it good, and I use it again).

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There is no need to indulge in subtleties : inspiration is familiar enough. And there can be no mistake : it is inspiration which has supplied the supreme need of expression in all times and in all places. A common remark is that inspiration either *is* or is not, and when it is not, nothing summoned to replace it by the human skill which interest obliterates, by the discursive intelligence, or by the talent acquired with labour, can make up in us for the lack of it. We recognize it easily by the way it completely takes possession of our mind, so that at long intervals for any problem set we are momentarily prevented from being the plaything of one rational solution rather than of another, and by that kind of short-circuit which it sets up between a given idea and what answers to it (in writing, for example). Just as in the physical world, the short-circuit occurs when the two "poles" of the machine are linked by a conductor having either no or very little resistance. In poetry and in painting, surrealism has done everything it could to increase the number of the short-circuits. Its dearest aim now and in the future must be the artificial reproduction of that ideal moment in which a man who is a prey to a particular emotion, is suddenly caught up by "the stronger than himself," and thrust, despite his bodily inertia, into immortality. If he were then lucid and awake, he would issue from the predicament in terror. The great thing is that he should not be free to come out, that he should go on talking all the time the mysterious ringing is going on : indeed, it is thanks to that whereby he ceases to belong to himself that he belongs to us. Provided the products of psychic activity which dreaming and automatic writing * are, are as much as pos-

* If I feel I must insist so much on the value of the two operations, it is not because they seem to me to constitute in themselves alone the intellectual panacea, but because for a trained observer they lend themselves less than any others to confusion or trickery, and that further they are the best that has been found to invest man with a valid sense of his resources. It goes without saying that the conditions imposed on us by life make it impossible for such an apparently unmotivated exercise of thought to go on uninterrupted. Those who have yielded themselves up to it unreservedly,

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sible distracted from the will to express, as much as possible lightened of ideas of responsibility ever ready to act as brakes, and as much as possible kept independent of all that is not *the passive life of the intelligence*, these products have the following advantages, that they alone furnish the material for appreciating the grand style to the body of critics who in the artistic domain are strangely disabled ; that they allow of a general reclassification of lyrical values; and that they offer a key to go on opening indefinitely that box of never-ending drawers which is called man and so dissuade him from making an about-turn for reasons of pure pre-

however low some of them may later have fallen, will one day turn out not to have been quite vainly projected into such a complete *internal faerie*. In comparison with this faerie, a return to any premeditated activity of mind, however it may appeal to the majority of their contemporaries, will in their eyes provide no more than a poor spectacle.

These very direct means, means which are, let us say it again, open to all, means which we persist in putting forward so soon as the question is no longer essentially to produce works of art, but to light up the unrevealed and yet revealable part of our being in which all the beauty, all the love, and all the virtue with which we scarcely credit ourselves, are shining intensely—these immediate means are not the only ones. Notably, it seems that now there is much to be expected of certain methods of pure deception, the application of which to art and life would have the effect of fixing attention neither on the real nor on the imaginary, but on the, so to speak, *hither side of the real*. It is easy to imagine novels which cannot end as there are problems which remain unsolved. When, however, shall we have the novel in which the characters, having been abundantly defined with a minimum of particularities, will act in an altogether foreseeable way in view of an unforeseen result; and, inversely, the novel in which psychology will not scamp its great but futile duties at the expense of the characters and events, but will really hold up (as a microscopic slide is held up) between two blades a fraction of a second and in this will be surprised the germs of incidents; this other novel, in which the verisimilitude of the scenery will for the first time fail to hide from us the strange symbolical life which even the most definite and most common objects lead not only in dreams; again, the novel in which the construction will be quite simple, but in which, however, an elopement will be described with the words for fatigue, a storm described with precision but *gaily*, &c.? Whoever believes with us that it is time to have done with the provoking insanities of "realism" will have no difficulty in adding to these proposals for himself.

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servation on those occasions in the dark when he runs into the externally-closed doors of the "beyond," of reality, of reason, of genius, and of love. The day will be when these palpable evidences of an existence other than the one we believe ourselves to be leading will no longer be treated as cavalierly as now. It will then seem surprising that, having been so close to *truth* as we are, we in general should have taken care to provide ourselves with some literary alibi or other instead of plunging into the water though ignorant of swimming, and going into the fire though not believing in the phoenix, in order to attain this truth.

The moral preoccupations which had been allotted but little space in the *Manifesto* of 1924 are expounded most insistently in the *Second Manifesto*, and it may even be said that in this latter book all others are made subordinate. Surrealism is affiliated to the occult theories according to which only the man who is really *dignified* can call forth evil spirits, and he must be as fully white outside as in; and it is also affiliated to the Hegelian doctrine, adapted to his own purpose by Engels, according to which, "Evil is the form in which the motive-power of the historical process is manifested." Thus surrealism requires from its participators above everything that they should observe the utmost purity of mind and life :

Surrealism is less ready than ever to accept departures from this purity and to content itself with what both this set of persons and that are ready to devote to it in between a couple of little betrayals which they think justified by the obscure and revolting pretext that one must live. We will not put up with this charity of the "talents." It seems to us that what we are asking for is something involving either a wholehearted assent or a wholehearted refusal, and that there must be no mere pouring out of empty words nor mere profession of fanciful hopes. Is a man ready to risk everything so that at the very bottom of the crucible into which we propose throwing our poor abilities, what remains to us

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of reputation and our doubts, all jumbled up with the jolly “sensible” glassware, the radical notion of impotence and the absurdity of our supposed duties, he may have the joy of getting a glimpse of *the light which will cease to flicker?*

We maintain that the only chance of success for the surrealist operation lies in its being performed under conditions of moral asepsis, and the idea of this asepsis is still one few men will entertain. Yet otherwise there can be no arresting of that cancer of the mind, which consists in thinking far too sadly that certain things “are” when others, which might so well be, “are not.” We have contended that the things which are and those which might so well be should be fused, or thoroughly intercept each other, at the limits. What has to be done is not to be content with that, but to be unable to do less than tend desperately towards these limits.

A man who wrongly allows himself to be put off by a few monstrous historical failures, is still free to *believe* in his freedom. He is his own master, despite the old clouds which pass and his blind powers which stumble. Has he not a sense of brief and stolen beauty and of accessible, enduring and stealable beauty? That key of love which the poet claimed to have found, he too, if only he takes the trouble to look, he too has it. It depends solely on him whether he shall rise above the fleeting feeling of living dangerously and of dying. Let him despise all prohibitions and let him make use of that avenging weapon, the *idea*, against the bestiality of all beings and all things, and let him on the day when he is defeated—but he will be defeated only if *the world is the world*—let him treat the firing of the pathetic rifles as a volley of salute.

From 1930 to 1932 the history of surrealism is that of successful efforts to restore it to its proper becoming by gradually removing from it every trace of political opportunism. The review *La Révolution Surréaliste* (twelve issues) has been succeeded by another, *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution*, four issues of which have appeared so far. At the present—owing particularly to influences brought to bear by new and as yet insufficiently

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known elements whose suggestions must be reckoned with—it seems to me as though surrealist experimenting were about to be unreservedly resumed and with an extension of scope. This experimenting, by the way, has during the last two years regained momentum under the master-impulse given to it by Salvador Dali who expounds it, in actual result and prospectively, in the present issue of THIS QUARTER.

In the front rank of surrealist works which lend colour to surrealism at its present stage, I must refer to two films : *Le Chien andalou* and *L'Age d'Or* by Buñuel and Dali, the poems of René Char, Dali's poems and pictures, the latest *collages* by Ernst, *L'Homme approximatif* by Tzara, *Le Clavecin de Diderot* by Crevel, and *L'Immaculée Conception*. The scenario of *Le Chien andalou** and excerpts from the last two named works are given in translation in the present issue of THIS QUARTER.

As in 1928 surrealism had had to face a grave danger from within, when certain of its own adherents came increasingly to distrust its philosophic purport and failed to understand its moral and social tasks (*Second Manifesto of Surrealism*)—and it did not shrink from disqualifying, and severing relations with, all those who wanted to be content with that minimum of common activity which could be innocuously practised in literature and art—, so in 1932 surrealism has had to combat the evil resulting from the hypertrophy certain other supporters have shown of the will to immediate political action, the evil spreading to an extent which has gradually involved in these the sacrifice and obliteration of all other volitional effort.

* See page 149.

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The surrealist front would not for ten years have maintained itself unbroken had it not been for such continuous resistance to driftings towards "right" or "left." A drift to the left was some months ago seeking to crystallize itself around a poem by Aragon, *Front Rouge*, published in the review *Littérature de la Révolution Mondiale*.

This poem, deliberately conceived outside the sphere which surrealism believes should at present be allotted to expression, at once brought up the question whether a social purpose which we pursue in common with others can justify the relinquishing of methods peculiar to ourselves. However much it has cost me to appear to have in this matter parted company with Aragon, who, having appended his name to *Front Rouge*, was prosecuted by the French authorities, I was nevertheless obliged to answer the question negatively, supporting my position with arguments which I reprint, in part, from *Misère de la Poésie* (1932), where they appeared originally :

The social drama exists. Surrealists have repeatedly let it be known that they would not be content to remain mere spectators of that drama. Also the poetic drama exists and as the former it has had its heroes who—to speak only of the last century—were in this country Borel, Nerval, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Cros, Lautréamont and Jarry. Surrealists that we are, we are powerless to obliterate those names, to deny or even deflect the light we have received from them.

**

The fact that owing to circumstances entirely alien to poetry, *Front Rouge* found itself on the front page of poetic news and the subject of a curiosity such as, for a long time, no other poem has enjoyed, obliges me to consider it in itself, that is, in relation to what surrounds it in its own sphere, and not in its corollary trappings. Does *Front Rouge* mark a clear-cut change of course in the direction we believe

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poetry should follow in our day? Will the course of poetry be accordingly disturbed or modified? If we are to assume that its formula is new, useful, sufficiently general, and that it merges within itself the greatest number of anterior poetic possibilities and velleities, the poem must, indeed, bring us nearer to a settlement of the conflict existing between man's conscious thought and his lyric expression,—the conflict which impassions in the highest degree the poetical drama of which I spoke. It would then induce us to discard without delay the indirect language of poetry which hitherto has been ours: it would impose on us an instant programme of agitation from which, whether concerning verse or prose, we could not without cowardice refuse to shoulder.

I should, and my friends would likewise, be only too happy to accept such a hopeful prospect if it were not shown to be entirely illusory by certain historical considerations. I only mention as a reminder how Hegel was led in his *Aesthetik* to divide art into symbolic, classic and romantic. Originally aided but little by intelligence, imagination is reduced to abstraction in respect of whatever appertains to the elementary configuration of physical objects. In classic art the spirit constitutes the core of the representation, the sensible form alone being taken from nature. In romantic art, abandoning more and more the exterior reality, the spirit seeks itself solely within. This second manner, Hegel observes, "results in the absolute negation of all that is finite and particular. Simple unity, concentrated upon itself, destroys all outside relation, slips out of the process which leads all natural beings through their successive phases of birth, growth, decay and renewal; resists, in a word, whatever sets limits to the spirit. All particular divinities become absorbed in this infinite unity. In this pantheon all gods are deposed. The flame of *subjectivity* has consumed them." * When, on the other hand, he calls attention to the two great reefs on which such an art must come to grief, namely *servile imitation of nature in its accidental*

* This may be the place to correct an idealist error of Hegel's, to which is due his conceiving real things as degrees of realization of the absolute Idea. One may say that in art as elsewhere this conception has given place to another, according to which the ideal "is only the material transposed and translated inside the heads of men." But this in no way affects the dialectical progress assigned to art by Hegel.

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forms, and *humour*, and when he finally gives *objective humour* as the merging point of the two, one cannot, in view of the various art movements that have succeeded one another since his death (naturalism, impressionism, symbolism, cubism, futurism, dadaïsm, surrealism), contest the immensely prophetic value of his statement.* The truth is that romantic art in the spacious Hegelian sense is still far from having run its course and that, since the general forms of the development of art do not permit the individual any appreciable licence, whether we like it or not, we are probably in for a full share of objective humour in art.

* *

But returning to *Front Rouge* and to the artificial opposition in which one is tempted to put it to the environment from which it sprang, I owe it to myself to say that it opens no new approach to poetry and that it would be vain to commend it to our contemporary poets as an example to follow, since in this domain an objective point of *departure* can only be an objective point of *arrival*, and since, in this poem, *the return to the outer subject*, in particular *the passionate subject*, conflicts with the entire historic lesson deducible in our day from the most developed poetic forms. Already a century ago (Cf. Hegel) the subject had, in these forms, been no more than a matter of indifference and thenceforward it has been impossible to set it *a priori*.

Considering, then, the special turn of the poem, its repeated references to particular incidents, to circumstances of public life, and finally recalling that it was written during Aragon's visit to Soviet Russia, I am forced to the con-

* I regret that I cannot here dwell at greater length on the remarkable oscillation between those two poles (1. Imitation of the outward accidental aspect; 2. Humour), which characterizes all artistic activity for the last century. On the one hand, imitation of the most commonplace aspects of life (naturalism); the most fugitive ones in nature (impressionism); objects considered from the point of volume and matter (cubism), and objects in movement (futurism); on the other hand, humour particularly conspicuous in times of trouble and testifying to the artist's imperious need of dominating the accidental when it tends to impose itself objectively: first, the symbolism of Lautréamont and Rimbaud synchronous with the war of 1870: pre-dadaïsm (Roussel, Duchamp, Cravan) and dadaïsm (Vaché, Tzara), concurrent with the war of 1914.

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clusion that it offers no acceptable solution to the poetic problem of our day, but is a performance apart, which, attractive as it may be, is without a future, because it is poetically regressive, is, in other words, an *occasional poem*. After discussion, we find ourselves in our investigation precisely where we began.

The reading of these pages will have demonstrated that the surrealist conception of expression has so far maintained itself integrally, and despite the pathetic concerns with voluntary direction and supposed clarity which have been unceasingly opposed to it, it continues to dominate all our other incentives to activity. In our opinion, to abandon that conception for any other—for whatever purpose—is for certain persons to betray how suddenly they can fail to understand the historical justice of our movement. In the same measure as we continue to hold surrealist expression to be definitely committed to the automatism I have stressed, we shall also—and this must be clear by now—cling to our critical attitude with regard to the various intellectual and moral problems of contemporary interest. In order to clear up those problems, or at least to prepare a way for their solution, we have had to take into consideration the possibility of an upheaval in the social conditions which are largely responsible for the existence of those problems, and we insist as on a right that whatever is most significant and most specific in what we have to give shall not be alienated on behalf of any blind orthodoxy. In this struggle which we are carrying on against the processes of premature submission, not to a new social order which we ourselves invoke with all our strength, but to the rudimentary wills—rather all-too-simplifying wills—of a group of men who, like us, so far only expect that order, we feel we may defend what we consider worth defending.

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In the meantime, it does not at all appear to us impracticable to organize in the four corners of the earth a fairly extensive scheme of resistance and experiment. This plan, as regards its modes of application, cannot be settled until there has been an interchange of the innermost desires of the live youth of all countries, and an estimate of the subversive forces which may be unleashed when it shall be applied at one given point. Owing to insufficient space at our disposal, this plan can only be barely hinted at. But beware ! Enough if surrealism is restored to its true perspective, and we shall not despair of seeing some day a storm *rising* from within this tea-cup.

(*Rendered into English by E. W. T.*)



The Problem of a Day : *Drawing by Giorgio
di Chirico (1913).*

SALVADOR DALI

BINDING CRADLED—CRADLE BOUND

*Perduring binding
at the same time unjustly declining
a cup
some Portuguese cup
now manufactured
in a china factory
for a cup
in shape resembles
a sweet municipal Arab antinomy
set or seen thereabouts
like the gaze of my lovely Gala
the gaze of my lovely Gala
smell of wine-dregs
like the epithelial tissue of my lovely Gala
her funny lamplighting epithelial tissue*

yes I shall say it a thousand times over

*Perduring binding
at the same time unjustly declining
a cup
some Portuguese cup
now manufactured
in a china factory*

SALVADOR DALI

*for a cup
in shape resembles
a sweet municipal Arab antinomy
set or seen thereabouts
like the gaze of my lovely Gala
the gaze of my lovely Gala
smell of wine-dregs
like the epithelial tissue of my lovely Gala
her funny lamplighting epithelial tissue*

yes I shall say it a thousand times over

THE STINKING ASS

To Gala Eluard

It is possible for an activity having a moral bent to originate in a violently paranoiac will to systematize confusion.

The very fact of paranoia, and particularly consideration of its mechanism as a force and power, brings us to the possibility of a mental attack which may be of the order of, but in any case is at the opposite pole to, the attack to which we are brought by the fact of hallucination.

I believe the moment is at hand when, by a paranoiac and active advance of the mind, it will be possible (simultaneously with automatism and other passive states) to systematize confusion and thus to help to discredit completely the world of reality.

*

The new images which paranoiac thought may suddenly release will not merely spring from the unconscious; the force of their paranoiac power will itself be at the service of the unconscious.

These new and menacing images will act skilfully and corrosively, with the clarity of daily physical appearances; while its particular self-embarrassment will make us yearn for the old metaphysical mechanism having about it something we shall readily con-

SALVADOR DALI

fuse with the very essence of nature, which, according to Heraclitus, delights in hiding itself.

*

Standing altogether apart from the influence of the sensory phenomena with which hallucination may be considered more or less connected, the paranoiac activity always employs materials admitting of control and recognition. It is enough that the delirium of interpretation should have linked together the implications of the images of the different pictures covering a wall for the real existence of this link to be no longer deniable. Paranoia uses the external world in order to assert its dominating idea and has the disturbing characteristic of making others accept this idea's reality. The reality of the external world is used for illustration and proof, and so comes to serve the reality of our mind.

Doctors agree that the mental processes of paranoiacs are often inconceivably swift and subtle, and that, availing themselves of associations and facts so refined as to escape normal people, paranoiacs often reach conclusions which cannot be contradicted or rejected and in any case nearly always defying psychological analysis.

*

The way in which it has been possible to obtain a double image is clearly paranoiac. By a double image is meant such a representation of an object that it is also, without the slightest physical or anatomical change, the representation of another entirely different object, the second representation being equally devoid of any deformation or abnormality betraying arrangement.

Such a double image is obtained in virtue of the violence of the paranoiac thought which has cunningly and skilfully used the requisite quantity of

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pretexts, coincidences, &c., and so taken advantage of them as to exhibit the second image, which then replaces the dominant idea.

The double image (an example of which is the image of a horse which is at the same time the image of a woman) may be extended, continuing the paranoiac advance, and then the presence of another dominant idea is enough to make a third image appear (for example, the image of a lion), and so on, until there is a number of images limited only by the mind's degree of paranoiac capacity.

I challenge materialists to examine the kind of mental attack which such an image may produce. I challenge them to inquire into the more complex problem, which of these images has the highest probability of existence if the intervention of desire is taken into account; and also into the problem, even graver and more general, whether the series of these representations has a limit, or whether, as we have every reason to think, such a limit does not exist, or exists merely as a function of each individual's paranoiac capacity.

All this (assuming no other general causes intervene) is certainly enough for me to contend that our images of reality themselves depend upon the degree of our paranoiac faculty, and yet that theoretically a man sufficiently endowed with this faculty may at will see the form of any real object change, exactly as in voluntary hallucination, but with this (destructively) important difference, that the various forms assumed by the object in question are universally open to control and recognition as soon as the paranoiac has merely indicated them.

*

The paranoiac mechanism whereby the multiple image is released is what supplies the understanding

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with the key to the birth and origin of all images, the intensity of these dominating the aspect which hides the many appearances of the concrete. It is precisely thanks to the intensity and traumatic nature of images, as opposed to reality, and to the complete absence of interpenetration between reality and images, that we are convinced of the (poetic) impossibility of any kind of *comparison*. It would be possible to compare two things only if they admitted of no sort of mutual relation, conscious or unconscious. If such a comparison could be made tangible, it would clearly illustrate our notion of the arbitrary.

It is by their failure to harmonize with reality, and owing also to the arbitrary element in their presence, that images so easily assume the forms of reality and that the latter in turn adapts itself so readily to the violences of images, which materialist thought idiotically confuses with the violences of reality.*

Nothing can prevent me from recognizing the frequent presence of images in the example of the multiple image, even when one of its forms has the appearance of a stinking ass and, more, that ass is actually and horribly putrefied, covered with thousands of flies and ants; and, since in this case no meaning is attachable to the distinct forms of the image apart from the notion of time, nothing can convince me that this foul putrefaction of the ass is other than the hard and blinding flash of new gems.

Nor can we tell if the three great images—excrement, blood and putrefaction—are not precisely concealing the *wished for* “Treasure Island.”

* What I have in mind here are, in particular, the materialist ideas of Georges Bataille, but also, in general, all the old materialism which this gentleman dodderingly claims to rejuvenate when he bolsters it up with modern psychology.

SALVADOR LALI

Being connoisseurs of images, we have long since learned to recognize the image of desire in images of terror, and even the new dawn of the "Golden Age" in the shameful scatalogous images.

*

In accepting images the appearance of which reality strives painfully to imitate, we are brought to *desire ideal objects*.

Perhaps no image has produced effects to which the word *ideal* can more properly be applied than the tremendous image which is the staggering ornamental architecture called the "Modern Style." No collective effort has produced a dream world so pure and so disturbing as the "Modern Style" buildings, these being, apart from architecture, the true realization in themselves of desires grown solid. Their most violent and cruel automatism pitifully betrays a hatred of reality and a need for seeking refuge in an ideal world, just as happens in infantile neurosis.

This, then, is something we can still like, the imposing mass of these cold and intoxicating buildings scattered over Europe and despised and neglected by anthologies and scholarship. This is enough to confound our swinish contemporary aestheticians, the champions of the execrable "modern art," and enough too to confound the whole history of art.

*

It has to be said once for all to art critics, artists, &c., that they need expect nothing from the new surrealist images but disappointment, distaste and repulsion. Quite apart from plastic investigation and other buncombe, the new images of surrealism must come more and more to take the forms and colours of demoralization and confusion. The day is not far off when a picture will have the value, and only the

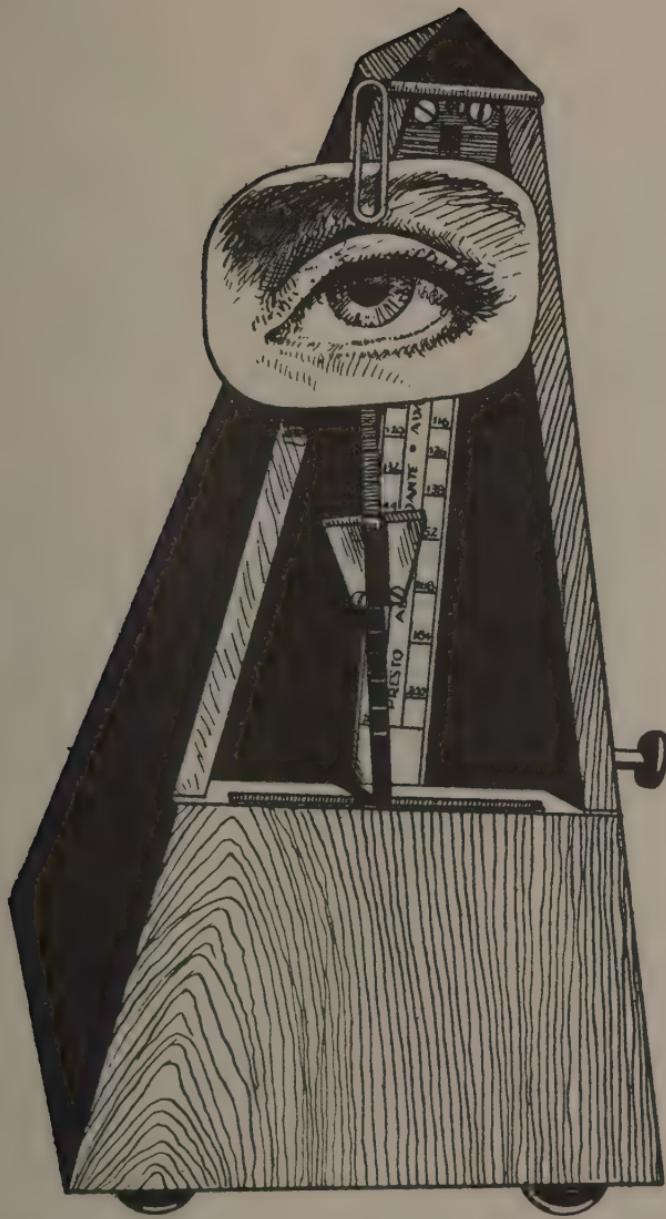
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value, of a simple moral act, and yet this will be the value of a simple *unmotivated act*.

As a functional form of the mind, the new images will come to follow the free bent of desire at the same time as they are vigorously repressed. The desperate activity of these new images may also contribute, simultaneously with other surrealist activities, to the destruction of reality, and so benefit everything which, through infamous and abominable ideals of all kinds, aesthetic, humanitarian, philosophical, &c., brings us back to the clear springs of masturbation, exhibitionism, crime, and love.

We shall be idealists subscribing to no ideal. The ideal images of surrealism will serve the imminent crisis of consciousness; they will serve Revolution.

(Rendered into English by J. Bronowski)



OBJECT OF DESTRUCTION (Drawing by *Man Ray*)

Cut out the eye from a photograph of one who has been loved but is seen no more. Attach the eye to the pendulum of a metronome and regulate the weight to suit the tempo desired. Keep going to the limit of endurance. With a hammer well-aimed, try to destroy the whole at a single blow.

BENJAMIN PÉRET

AT No. 125, BOULEVARD ST-GERMAIN

The half-hour after eleven was striking at a clock in the neighbourhood. A few taxicabs were passing nonchalantly and the camels had not yet all gone in. A person on the look-out could have seen in the distance the President of the Republic, who was wearing a cork-jacket and had with him the King of the Hellenes, the latter seeming so young that he made one want to teach him to read. They were being followed by a young hetaira, offering her services. It was raining gloves, which were being blown hither and thither by the chill November wind.

As they were passing No. 125 in the Boulevard Saint-Germain, they saw a man come out pushing in front of him an armchair on castors. In the armchair some one was seated in the posture of the tired man. Immediately it occurred to them that a crime had been committed there. A bath-tub, dropped from the fourth floor and crashing at their feet, strengthened their suspicions.

While one of them was following the mysterious man who, pushing the armchair, went off towards the Boulevard Saint-Michel, the other was putting a little pomatum in his hair. Wearing the air of the absent-minded stroller, he climbed the stairs which were so interminable that it seemed to him he was rising from the depths of the sea. Small explosions were marking

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his passing of each landing, and snakes were gliding along the banisters. A drunken soldier nearly knocked him down. "This is a brothel," he thought, and he blew his nose noisily. A door opened and a voice twanged in a Marseilles accent:

"What's the matter, my good sir?"

"I want to see M. Seraphim, the gentleman, you know, who drops bath-tubs out of the window at half-past eleven."

"Fourth floor, on the right," came from the voice.

And the door closed with the crackling of a flame fanned by the wind.

He was intensely moved; was he going to accomplish his purpose at the first attempt and was the singular character who dropped bath-tubs out of windows going to tell him why summer follows after spring? He just gave himself time to shed a tear for his sister who had died the year before and then he knocked at the door he had been told of. A cock crowed and almost at once there was a wild bleating. Hardly had the bleating stopped than he clearly heard the sound of running water, as if a tap had accidentally been left on, but no human voice made itself heard.

"What a life!" he muttered, and he knocked again. A chattering of jaws followed by the same wild bleating answered him. A few seconds passed during which it seemed to him he heard a gale-like gust of wind. A third time he knocked at the door, but this time there was complete silence. He was puzzled. For if a bath-tub had dropped at his feet some one must have thrown it out! And yet here he was at the place whence it must have dropped, and the door was staying shut despite his knocks.

He gave himself just time to swat a fly and his mind was made up. He stepped back a little and

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then threw himself at the door. It gave at once and smashed like glass, the while a jolly smell of new-mown hay reached him. He remained for a few moments stunned and wept freely. He would have been unable to say why this smell was bringing back those youthful years when other staircases had been the scenes of select experiments.

The flame of a fusee enabled him to see the room he had come into. A lawn of verdant turf, carefully watered and closely cropped, filled it. In the centre was a slightly convex bed of hyacinths, crowned with a flowering mimosa. In a corner, propped against the wall, a man seemed asleep.

Why was it that at that very moment, a voice, human although it sounded like a gramophone, should have begun singing quietly ?

*On the banks of the Riviera,
Where a balmy breeze doth blow,
More adored and ever fairer
Every woman wants to grow.*

Why also did a voice murmur in his ear, as one communicates a secret, the sacramental words with which Jesus established the Eucharist ?

“Take, eat, this is my body.... Drink, this is my blood.”

A second fusee showed him the existence in the four corners of the room of four plants whose nature he could not tell.

As he was bringing his match near to one of them —the one on his right, to be exact—it caught fire and lit the room with a feeble light.

“I thought as much,” said he, “and one must expect further accidents.”

He successively lit the other plants, which were no other than arums. A pale radiance, as though coming through ground glass, spread over the room.

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He went up to the man who had not stirred throughout all these goings-on. "Well, my lad!" Midnight struck and the slight pressure of the hand on the shoulder—or at all events so I suppose—caused a thin stream of milk to run from his eyes. Still the man did not move. He thought he had better take his hand and found that it was warm, but he noticed that it stuck to the knee on which it rested. He wanted to shake the other hand: it was as stiff as the first. He took his pocket-knife and jabbed the blade into the mysterious character's right wrist. The flesh was red, but not a drop of blood came out.

He put his revolver to his right eye and fired. A hole replaced the eye, and milk came out freely, making a long white trail on the dinner-jacket he was wearing.

He noticed a crumpled newspaper dropped beside the man. He opened it. It was a very old copy of the *Journal*, with a piece missing. He looked for this piece and finally found it between his legs. He read the date: "January 27, 1903."* As when one turns on the switch, there was light: *he had been sleeping there since that day.*

And now he had killed him with a revolver shot in the eye!

"There is nothing more for me to do here," he thought, and he went to the right-hand door opening into another room which, though without windows, was bright with light. In this second room were long parallel tables flanked on either side with little arm-chairs. Seated in the little armchairs, typists were typing feverishly and writings came out of their typewriters automatically, glided along the table, and disappeared goodness knows where.

His coming in was not noticed. He went up to the first typist and asked, "M. Seraphim, please?"

* The ex-Kaiser's birthday.

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“In five minutes, you will catch sight of his cigarette and of his youngest sister,” was the answer he got.

Let us return to the King of the Hellenes, whom we have left following the queer character who was wheeling an armchair on castors towards the Boulevard Saint-Michel.

Opposite the Rue Danton a motor-car almost knocked down the armchair and its singular occupant. They continued on their way, crossed the Boulevard Saint-Michel, went on as far as the riverside embankment, and thence to the Jardin des Plantes. It might be imagined that at such a late hour the gate would have been shut. Yet hardly had they come up to it than it opened automatically, as if some one had pressed a hidden spring. The gate closed again at once, and in spite of repeated attempts the King of the Hellenes failed to make it give. To him a closed gate was not an obstacle, accustomed as he had been from childhood to the most vigorous physical exercise : football, cycling, motor-driving, flying, jumping, swimming, and rowing were as familiar to him as the Gospels and prehistoric times. In a few seconds, he had got over the lofty gate and was inside the enclosure. The trail of the armchair, which had, goodness knows why, remained luminous, showed him his way as plainly as if he had still had the ridiculous chariot in sight. A few herons did try to interfere with his advance, but the lozenge he gave them cleared his road at once. A gazelle also came up to tell him that she had not forgotten him. There was even an enormous crab, which tried to seize one of his feet in order to lead him whither he did not want to go.

The trail led to the bear-pit. He reached this now silent spot at the same time as the man with the arm-

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chair. A straw man, who was on watch at the pit, nodded his head in assent; a white sheet dropped to the bottom of the pit and spread out there. Forthwith, a heart, a jaw, lengths of unwound entrails, a horse-cloth, a packet of cocoa, a woman's chemise, and a naturalized bird were successively dropped on to the white sheet, so as to mark the seven corners of a regular polygon. A heap of human excrement then dropped near-by and set the seven objects moving, so that a frenzied dance began on the part of the heart, the jaw, the entrails, the horsecloth, the packet of cocoa, the woman's chemise and the naturalized bird. The dance tempo became faster, as if the seven objects hoped by chasing to overtake each other. A powerful searchlight swept the scene for an instant without checking them. Some birds, vultures no doubt, were awakened by the noise and came and hovered over the pit, but hesitated to go down into it. The sound of a motor-car progressively growing louder revealed that one of these machines was coming along. It stopped for a few moments at the pit, and a woman, veiled and gloved, picked up a parcel of flags from beside her and dropped them on to the sheet. At once the mad dance stopped. During this scene, which had perhaps lasted several years, the man with the armchair passed his hand across his brow and found it damp.

“Good Lord ! ” said he, “and yet to-day is the twenty-fifth of June, 1922.”

He remained abstracted for a few moments, and then he said aloud :

1° An upright, learned and disinterested judge, a young, virtuous, agreeable and fair woman, and a discreet, sincere and considerate friend are all rare, but such precious treasures exist and may be found.

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2° Those who govern are like the celestial bodies, which have much splendour and no rest.

3° Victory is splendid when it amounts only to overcoming a foe, but it is hateful when it results in the oppression of the weak.

4° It requires much wit to play the part of a mocker and little common sense to try to do so.

5° Nothing is given so freely as, and more easily than, advice.

6° Unintelligible mortals, how can you unite so much baseness and nobility, so many virtues and vices?

7° He who is able to forgo ambition forthwith frees himself from much misery, much watching, and sometimes much crime.

8° A Greek philosopher replied when asked with what government men could lead the most secure lives and be exposed to the least danger, “A government which numbers many friends of virtue and few supporters of vice, or none at all.”

9° Have a little patience and I will show you all.

10° Your fruits will never be too many.

11° It is possible to differ in opinion and be no less fond of one another. Differences of attitude in one's friends enlighten one and friendship enables one to stand contradiction.

12° The joys of revenge are not to be indulged in with impunity. It is soon realized that this cruel enjoyment is not suited to the human heart and that hatred is a self-punishment.

13° If you denigrate yourself, others will think you are blacker than you say; if you praise yourself, they will not believe a word of it.

14° It is said of the French that they alone realize the brevity of human life; for in France everything

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is done so promptly that it looks as if the French were convinced they each had only a day to live.

15° At a party at Mme. X's, a lady of society, they were playing at finding unsuspected distinctions between one thing and another. "What difference is there," said the hostess, "between me and a watch?"

"Madam," replied a British Ambassador, "a watch adds the hours, you subtract them."

16° A man was being told how he had been insulted. He replied, "The insults would not have been uttered if it had not been thought you liked hearing them."

17° Cato said, on being asked why no statue had been raised to him, since he had deserved so well of the Commonwealth, "I prefer being asked this than why I had been given a statue."

The man, who up till then had remained motionless in his armchair, rose with a single movement, walked to the pit, climbed over the balustrade, and jumped down on to the sheet. The bears, which had no doubt been only waiting for this, came out of their cages and saluted him sedately. The man did not seem in the least surprised and began to undress. When he was quite naked, his carefully depilated body was seen to become suddenly covered with a thick and woolly fur, and upon his head a multitude of little worms, white as snow, were seen in active movement. They crawled on to his neck, his back, his legs, and soon around him a swarm of little white things were trying to get off the sheet. A particular geometrical figure was obsessing the mind of the man left on the brink of the pit: "The square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides."

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The King of the Hellenes did not know what to make of the scene unfolding before him. He was thinking of the bookmaker who had given him The Trinity for the fifth race and had made him lose a thousand francs.

There was only one thing left for him to do : unnoticed, he left the Jardin des Plantes. Hardly had he come to the riverside embankment than he heard shouted, "Late extra!" He bought the newspaper and read :

"ROME.—For several days there has been in one of the hospitals here a patient whom it has not been possible to identify. He says he is the King of the Hellenes. He also says he is a ship-owner in Venice. He is suffering from sleeping-sickness. His condition is very serious."

A shudder shook him from head to foot : ROME OR PARIS ?

From street to café, by way of the tissues, bone pulps are stratified, crystallized, or deposited. The confetti-eyed burglars find in their hair the key to their desires. Children eat bed-bugs, hats eat children, and straps bear farther away than the eye can see collapsed limbs.

He hailed a taxi and drove to the bone-pit, and there among the fish, which were patiently awaiting the hour of resurrection, he sat down and fell asleep.

Still M. Seraphim had not come, and the President of the Republic was beginning to think that not every hour numbers sixty minutes. He filled his time by plaiting a little chain of camel-hairs, but this senile occupation failed to satisfy him completely. He did

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think for a moment of killing a few typists in order to open up their bodies and complete his anatomical studies, which he had been obliged to break off as a result of his affair with Gaby Berliet, the Folies-Bergère dancer, who had left him with the best and at the same time the most disagreeable of memories : the best, because she had been a charming mistress, and the most disagreeable—was he not now resorting to mercury injections ?

As he was sitting there, unable to make up his mind what to do, an effeminate youth came in and beckoned to a typist, who vanished with him through the doorway opposite the one by which he had come in.

This worried him, and he went after the pair. Through a maze of corridors which he went through after them, he was brought to a huge swimming pool, where seven or eight women's bodies were floating extraordinarily elongated. The youth gallantly invited his companion to undress and handed her a bathing costume. In reply she smiled at him, and on all sides small cog-wheels and tiny springs, rather like watch-springs, were seen to be fluttering about. Having fluttered all over the place and bumped into the walls of the ceiling, they all dropped into the pool, and there was a tiny spark as each touched the surface of the water. The woman was the first to dive in and she rose again a few yards away and swam gracefully. Lobsters were following and trying to overtake her. She was swimming faster and faster, and the clocks at the four corners of the pool ticked more quickly in time with her. Suddenly the air seemed full of dust. The President of the Republic choked : it was becoming more and more difficult to breathe in this unhealthy atmosphere.

The President of the Republic lit a cigarette and fainted.

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*

When he revived, the sunlight was playing on the water, and on its surface children's little boats were rocking gently. The woman he had seen dive in and swim so gracefully, was now floating on the water extraordinarily elongated and as naked as the others. Hundreds of lobsters were seeking nourishment in their abdomens, their stomachs, and one was almost engulfed in the beautiful swimmer's thorax.

TWO POLICEMEN KILLED TWO WOMEN WOUNDED

These words stood out in black on one of the walls, being followed almost at once by :

CURB MARKET

	50 ..		336 ..	
		Padang	303 ..	
Huanchaca	157 ..			34 50

CLOSING PRICES

Brusy	2735 ..	2810 ..	Royal Dutch	2290 ..	2265 ..
Ekaterine	1430 ..	1425 ..	Shell	288 50	286 ..
Part Héraclée	2650 ..	2750 ..	—	27 50	..
Toula	260 ..	259 ..	Sumatra	805 ..	802 ..
Chino	360	Sucrateries		
Ray	190 ..	180 ..	Argen. 6% 1910.	257 25	260 50
Vieille Montagne	1345 ..	1338 ..	Brazil 5% 1914.	217 25	218 ..
Columbia	482 ..	480 ..	Colom. 5% 1906.	900 ..	1035 ..

He remained a moment studying his finger-tips and wondering which horse to back.

Through little jagged holes in the ceiling, which let in the sunlight, a rain of pollen fell slowly on to

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the water, which soon became covered with a thin yellow layer. The President of the Republic rose and went to the water's edge. He dipped in his hand. The water was warm : about 84°.

He could not remember what he had come there for and he decided to go back to the typists' office. He went through a doorway, down one stairs and up another, walked along an interminable corridor, crossed a great hall, and suddenly found himself in a park where trees of northern climes grew beside cacti and palm-trees, banana-trees, mangroves, monkey-bread trees, and other trees whose nature he could not tell. On the branches of these trees were hung a great many different things, violins, clocks, flower-vases, razors, brushes, trunks, silk stockings, belts, and acetylene lamps.

“Noel, Noel,” came the incessant chant of voices from every tree trunk.

He took the first path he chanced upon and soon came to a clearing, where he saw the King of the Hellenes with an orang-outang, both eating figs from a heap on a Spanish flag.

They had to admit to each other that they had been hoaxed. A small railway engine came across the clearing, drawing some flat trucks. Taking advantage of its slowing down, they jumped on to one of the trucks and were soon brought to the gate of a match factory. The gate opened wide and the train went into a large yard planted with manganese trees. They climbed off the truck and went inside the factory. Great was their astonishment at seeing with what precision a machine was changing planks into matches. Catching sight of a foreman, they said to him,

“M. Seraphim, please ? ”

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“ This way, gentlemen, go through the workshop, take the first door on the right and go up the stairs. It’s the second office on the left.”

An angel came out of a machine, the purpose of which they could not have told, and stopping them on their way, said :

1° A French lady was reproving the Siamese Ambassador for having so many wives.

“ Madam,” he replied, “ if Siam contained such beautiful and well-proportioned women as yourself, we should have only one wife each.”

2° A man interested in painting, after looking at the Seven Sacraments painted by Poussin, criticized the picture in which Marriage is represented. “ I can see,” he said, “ that it is hard to make a success of marriage even in painting.”

3° Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia, exclaimed on seeing at the Sorbonne a portrait of Cardinal Richelieu, “ O, great man ! If you were still alive I should give you half my Empire in exchange for your telling me how to govern the other half.”

4° Louis XII of France, who before coming to the throne had been Duke of Orleans, was urged to avenge the insults he had suffered in those earlier days. He replied that the King of France could not avenge insults suffered by the Duke of Orleans.

5° An Arab force was investing a fortress. The commanding officer told his men a large sum of money would be paid to the one who first placed a fascine in the moat which was under the whole of the enemy’s fire. Nobody volunteered. The surprised general reproached them. “ We should all have volunteered,” replied one of the gallant fellows, “ if the job had not been made a matter of money.”

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- 6° I want bread, not money.
- 7° Keep quiet, you shall have some.
- 8° They did it; if we had, we should own up.
- 9° People have been killed, and more will be.
- 10° It was 2 a.m. when I went to bed.
- 11° He is the nastiest and most envious man in existence, and indeed he is hated.
- 12° Great heavens, how that fellow is hypocritical!

The President of the Republic and the King of the Hellenes had rather suspected it, and indeed it did not make them give up their scheme.

M. Seraphim greeted them very pleasantly. Without making any bones about it, they explained to him why they had come.

As they talked, M. Seraphim nodded and seemed to agree with them. When they had finished, he replied :

“Half-past eleven is situated round about the forty-second degree of latitude south. It is hot, it is cold, it is raining, it is windy, it is snowing, there is lightning, there is a storm. The leaves are falling, the clocks are stopping, the earth is quaking, the cows are urinating, lead is melting, the rock splits, shoes are coming to pieces, the cigarette lights itself, and finally men die like flies. The butterflies shake with terror, for keys no longer turn in their locks. I have just picked up a pin which had fallen : it is my man, I study the lines of my hand, it is my garden.

“How many bears go to make a door ? Certainly fewer than women to make a mirror. If birds sing, we shall not know it, for great is our distress and our illusions are cut up into pretty little postage-stamps.

“Let the devil take the hindmost : I cannot eat, I cannot drink, I cannot sleep, I cannot live, I am con-

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tent to look between the varnished boards at a mystery without colour, smell or savour.

“ I get up at seven in the morning, I do a little lace-work with sparrow-hawk’s feathers, I strew poppy petals on my mother who is dead, and every morning at the same time I see coming out of her fingers and her toes little capsules which quickly burst and spread a smell of lemon.

“ There is no armchair, there is no bath-tub. I eat, I sleep, I drink, I live, and I assure you that :

“ *Nothing pleases the mind more than the light of truth.*

“ *Crime is more daring than virtue.*

“ *Anger is a rising of the spirit as forceful as that of sympathy is gentle : but one degrades man, the other does him honour.*

“ *The art of making intemperance and health get on together is an art as visionary as the philosopher’s stone and judicial astrology.*

“ *Nature’s simplicity is more pleasant than all art’s embellishments.*

“ *I have as much money as you will have.*

“ *She is very pretty.*

“ If somewhere you come across a woman who mentions Napoleon III, give her a cigar and take her for a cure in Spain.

“ Gentlemen, your shirts are becoming slit from top to bottom, and your bodies are following suit. Your organs are becoming visible : they are lined with little fringed butterflies. Unless I am mistaken, you are hungry. Allow me to invite you to share my frugal meal.”

ANDRÉ BRETON

THE FREE UNION

*My woman whose tresses are wood-fire
Whose thoughts are heat-lightning
Whose body is hour-glass
My woman whose body is otter in tiger jaws
My woman whose mouth is cockade and bouquet of
stars of the last magnitude
Whose teeth are spoor of a white mouse on the white
Whose tongue is grated glass and amber earth
My woman whose tongue is stabbed Host
Whose tongue is doll that opens and shuts its eyes
Whose tongue is stone past belief
My woman whose lashes are pothooks' down-strokes
Whose brows are rim of nest of swallow
My woman whose temples are slate of roof of green-
And fug on windows house
My woman whose shoulders are champagne
And fountain frozen o'er its dolphins
My woman whose wrists are matches
My woman whose fingers are hazard and ace of
Whose fingers are hay hearts
My woman whose armpits are beechmast and marten
And Midsummer Night
And privet and nest of
Whose arms are foam of sea and lock
And corn and mill mixed
My woman whose legs are spindles moving
In gestures of clockwork and despair*

ANDRE BRETON

*My woman whose calves are pith of elder
Whose feet are bunch of keys whose feet are
caulkers drinking*

*My woman whose neck is impearled barley
My woman whose throat is golden Vale
And tryst in the bed yea the bed of the torrent
Whose breasts are night*

*My woman whose breasts are salt sea molehill
My woman whose breasts are crucible of ruby
Whose breasts are spectrum of rose through dew
My woman whose belly is fan of the days unfurling
Whose belly is giant claw*

*My woman whose back is bird soaring plumb
Whose back is quick-silver
Whose back is brightness
Whose nape is rolled stone and moist chalk
And fall of the glass that held the wine*

*My woman whose hips are skiff
Whose hips are candelabrum whose hips are arrow-
And stem of feather of white peacock feather
And numb balance*

*My woman whose rumps are sandstone and amianth
My woman whose rumps are shoulders of swan
My woman whose rumps are spring-time
Whose sex is iris*

*My woman whose sex is placer and ornithorynchus
My woman whose sex is mirror
My woman whose eyes full of tears
Whose eyes are compass needle are violet panoply
My woman whose eyes are savanna*

*My woman whose eyes are water to drink in prison
My woman whose eyes are wood under the axe for
ever*

*Whose eyes are level of water level of air earth and
fire*

(1931)

LETHAL RELIEF

*The statue of Lautréamont
Its plinth of quinine tabloids
In the open country
The author of the Poetical Works lies flat on his face
And near at hand the hiloderm a shady customer
keeps vigil
His left ear is glued to the ground it is a glass case
it contains
A prong of lightning the artist has not failed to
figure aloft
In the form of a Turk's head the blue balloon
The Swan of Montevideo with wings unfurled ready
to flap at a moment's notice
Should the problem of luring the other swans from
the horizon arise
Opens upon the false universe two eyes of different
hues
The one of sulphate of iron on vines of the lashes the
other of sparkling mire
He beholds the vast funnelled hexagon where now
in no time the machines
By man in dressings rabidly swaddled
Shall lie a-writhing
With his radium bougie he quickens the dregs of the
human crucible
With his sex of feathers and his brain of bull-paper
He presides at the twice nocturnal ceremonies whose
object due allowance for fire having been made is
the interversion of the hearts of the bird and the
man
Convulsionary in ordinary I have access to his side
The ravishing women who introduce me into the
rose-padded compartment
Where a hammock that they have been at pains to
contrive with their tresses for*

ANDRE BRETON

*Me is reserved for
Me for all eternity
Exhort me before taking their departure not to catch
a chill in the perusal of the daily
It transpires that the statue in whose latitude the
squitch of my nerve terminals
Weighs anchor is tuned each night like a piano*

(The White-Haired Revolver, 1932)

FACTORY

Truly the great legend of the rails and reservoirs, the lassitude of the draught-beasts, enter into the hearts of certain men. Here are some such who have become acquainted with the transmission-belts: good-bye to the regularity of their respiration. The accidents that are a common feature of the work are more to be admired, none shall dispute it, than marriages of reason. The moment comes, however, when the boss's daughter traverses the yard. It is easier to rid oneself of a grease-spot than of a dead leaf; one's hand does not tremble at least. Equidistant from the manufactory and the studio the prism of superintendence plays malignantly with the star of recruitment.

(*The Magnetic Fields*, 1921)

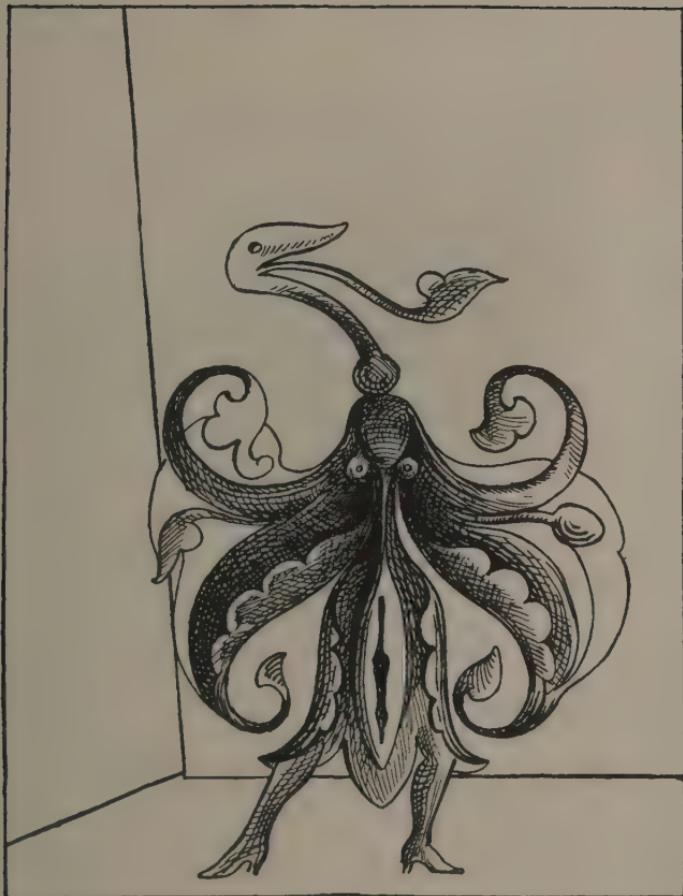
Unclean night, night of flowers night of death-rattles, spirituous night, lo ! the hand thereof is but an abject kite that is caught in a mesh of strands, black strands and shameful ! Oh, champaign land

ANDRE BRETON

of white bones and red, where hast thou stowed thine impure trees, and thine arborescent candour, and thy fidelity that was a purse of serried pearls, with flowers, with so-so inscriptions, with pansignifications ? And lo ! it is thou the bandit, the bandit, ah ! assassin, thou water bandit thou sheddest thy knives in mine eyes, thou art then quite pitiless, radiant water, lustral water that I cherish ! My imprecations, even as a terrifyingly pretty girl-child brandishing her broom broom at you, shall pursue you at great length. Lo ! at the end of each branch a star and it is not enough, no, chicory of the Virgin. I do not want to see you any more, I want to riddle with leaden pellets your birds that are not even leaves any more. I want to hunt you right away from my door, you hearts with pips in you, you love's-brains. Away with the crocodiles there, away with crocodile fangs studding Samurai warriors' breast-plates, away, in a word, with jets of ink, and renegades everywhere, renegades with purple ruffles, renegades with black-currant eyes, with goosy locks ! There, it is finished, I shall no more hide my shame, I shall no more be calmed by nothing, yea and by less than nothing. And if the shuttle-cocks be as big as houses how shall we play do you suppose, how keep up our vermin, how lay our hands on the lips of the shells that will go on talking (ah, the shells, who will put a stop to their talking, at last ?). No more breathing, or blood, or soul, but hands to knead the air, hands to brown the dough of the air, hands to crack the great gum of the sleeping banners, solar hands, in a word, arctic hands !

(*Soluble Fish*, 1924)

(Rendered into English by Samuel Beckett)



Chimaera (*Drawing by Max Ernst*).

MAX ERNST

INSPIRATION TO ORDER

Since the becoming of no work which can be called absolutely surrealist is to be directed consciously by the mind (whether through reason, taste, or the will), the active share of him hitherto described as the work's "author" is suddenly abolished almost completely. This "author" is disclosed as being a mere spectator of the birth of the work, for, either indifferently or in the greatest excitement, he merely watches it undergo the successive phases of its development. Just as the poet has to write down what is being thought—voiced—inside him, so the painter has to limn and give objective form to *what is visible inside him*.

Upon the publication of André Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism*, sceptics and humorists alike asserted that to produce works in this way could only be within the power of mediums, visionaries, and in general those endowed with second sight. "Everybody now knows that there is no *surrealist painting*. Neither the pencil lines drawn by chance movements, nor the pictures reproducing dream images, nor imaginative fancies, can of course be so described." It was in this strain that in Number Three of *La Révolution Surrealiste* (April 1925) one of the editors, M. Pierre Naville, sought to discourage us. Yet at the very time he was thus prophesying, the "unconscious" had, as one could easily establish, already made a dramatic appearance in the practical realm of painted and drawn poetry.

*

Thanks to studying enthusiastically the mechanism of inspiration, the surrealists have succeeded in discovering certain essentially poetic processes whereby the plastic work's

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elaboration can be freed from the sway of the so-called conscious faculties. Amounting to a bewitching of either reason, taste, or the will, these processes result in the surrealist definition being rigorously applied to drawing, painting, and even to some extent photography; and although some of them—*collage*,* for instance—were being used before our advent, surrealism has so systematized and modified them that it is now possible to photograph either on paper or on canvas the amazing graphic appearances of thoughts and desires.

Being called upon to give here some idea of the first process to reveal itself to us and to put us on the track of others, I am inclined to say that it amounts to the exploiting of the *fortuitous encounter upon a non-suitable plane of two mutually distant realities* (this being a paraphrase and generalization of the celebrated Lautréamont quotation, “Beautiful like the chance meeting upon a dissecting table of a sewing-machine with an umbrella”) or, to use a more handy expression, the cultivation of the effects of a *systematic putting out of place*, on the lines of André Breton’s theory which he expounds as follows :

Super-reality must in any case be a function of our will to put everything completely out of place (and of course (a) one may go so far as to put a hand out of place by isolating it from an arm, (b) the hand gains thereby *qua* hand, and (c) in speaking of putting out of place we are not referring merely to the possibility of action in space). (“Warning to the Reader” in *The Hundred-Headed Woman*.)

The way in which this process is most commonly carried out has led to its being currently described as *collage*.

Thanks to using, modifying and incidentally systematizing this process, nearly all the surrealists, painters as well as poets, have since its discovery been led from surprise to surprise. Among the finest results they have been fortunate enough to obtain, one must mention the creation of what they have called *surrealist objects*.

Let a ready-made reality with a naïve purpose apparently settled once for all (i.e. an umbrella) be suddenly juxtaposed to another very distant and no less ridiculous reality (i. e. a sewing-machine) in a place where both must be felt as *out*

* The cutting-up of various flat reproductions of objects or of parts of objects and the pasting of them together to form a picture of something new and odd—*Klebefeld* in German.

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of place (i.e. upon a dissecting table), and precisely thereby it will be robbed of its naïve purpose and its identity; through a relativity it will pass from its false to a novel absoluteness, at once true and poetic : umbrella and sewing-machine will make love. This very simple example seems to me to reveal the mechanism of the process. Complete transmutation followed by a pure act such as the act of love must necessarily occur every time the given facts make conditions favourable : *the pairing of two realities which apparently cannot be paired on a plane apparently not suited to them.* Speaking in 1921 of the *collage* process, Breton wrote:

It is the wonderful power to grasp two mutually distant realities without going beyond the field of our experience and to draw a spark from their juxtaposition; to bring within reach of our senses abstract forms capable of the same intensity and distinctness as others; and, while depriving us of any system of reference, to put us out of place in our very recollection—there is what, at the moment, he is concerned with. (Preface to the Max Ernest Exhibition of May, 1921.)

And he added prophetically : “ May it not be that we are thus getting ready to break loose some day from the law of identity ? ”

An analogous mechanism to that of *collage* can be detected by the reader in the imposing image contained in the following proposal by Dali for a *surrealist object*:

Let some huge motor-cars, three times as big as actual ones, be made in plaster or onyx with a thoroughness of detail greater than the most faithful moulds, let them be wrapped in women’s underwear and buried in a graveyard, the spot being indicated merely by a thin yellow-coloured clock. (*Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution*, No. 3.)

*

In the hope of increasing the fortuitous character of elements utilizable in the composing of a drawing and so increasing their abruptness of association, surrealists have resorted to the process called “ The Exquisite Corpse,” divulged elsewhere in this number.* The large share chance has in this is only limited by the role played for the first time by mental infection. On the strength of the results obtained

* Salvador Dali, *The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment*, pp. 197 sqq.

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(see the reproductions in *La Révolution surréaliste*, Nos. 9 and 10, and in *Variétés* for June, 1929), we may consider that this process is particularly well suited for producing strong and pure surrealist images in accordance with the criteria laid down by Breton as follows :

That, to my mind, [the surrealist image] is strong in proportion to the degree of arbitrariness it displays, I do not conceal; I mean the image which it takes longest to describe in concrete words, either because it secretes an enormous amount of apparent contradiction, or because one of its terms is strangely lacking, or because while promising to be sensational it appears to unravel weakly (or closes the angle of its pair of compasses suddenly), or because it affords of itself only a ridiculous *formal* justification, or because it is of the hallucinatory kind, or because with the concrete it quite naturally only masks the abstract, or because inversely it would imply the negation of some elementary physical property, or because it is funny. (*Manifesto of Surrealism*.)

*

In the days when we were most keen on research and most excited by our first discoveries in the realm of *collage*, we would come by chance, or as it seemed by chance, on (for example) the pages of a catalogue containing plates for anatomical or physical demonstration and found that these provided contiguously figurative elements so mutually distant that the very absurdity of their collection produced in us a hallucinating succession of contradictory images, super-imposed one upon another with the persistence and rapidity proper to amorous recollections. These images themselves brought forth a new plane in order to meet in a new unknown (the plane of non-suitability). Thereupon it was enough either by painting or by drawing to add, and thereby only obediently reproducing *what is visible within us*, a colour, a scrawl, a landscape foreign to the objects depicted, the desert, the sky, a geological section, a floor, a single straight line expressing the horizon, and a fixed and faithful image was obtained; what previously had been merely a commonplace page of advertising became a drama revealing our most secret desires. To take another example, a Second Empire embellishment we had found in a manual of drawing came to display as we considered it a strong propensity to change into a chimaera, which had about it something of bird and octopus and man and woman. My

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own drawing reproduced in this number illustrates this obsession. Here we are seemingly already in touch with what Dali was later to call "the paranoiac image" or "multiple image." His words are as follows :

The way in which it has been possible to obtain a double image is clearly paranoiac. By a double image is meant such a representation of an object that it is also, without the slightest physical or anatomical change, the representation of another entirely different object, the second representation being equally devoid of any deformity or abnormality betraying arrangement.

Such a double image is obtained in virtue of the violence of the paranoiac thought which has cunningly and skilfully used the requisite quantity of pretexts, coincidences, &c., and so taken advantage of them as to exhibit the second image, which then replaces the dominant idea.

The double image (an example of which is the image of a horse which is at the same time the image of a woman) may be extended, continuing the paranoiac advance, and then the presence of another dominant idea is enough to make a third image appear (for example, the image of a lion), and so on, until there is a number of images limited only by the mind's degree of paranoiac capacity. (*Le Surrealisme au Service de la Révolution*, No. 1.)

May it not be that in this way we have already broken loose from the law of identity ?

*

It remains to speak of another process in resorting to which I have been brought under the direct influence of the information concerning the mechanism of inspiration that is provided in the *Manifesto of Surrealism*. This process rests on nothing other than the intensification of the mind's powers of irritability, and in view of its technical features I have dubbed it *frottage* (rubbing), and it has had in my own personal development an even larger share than *collage*, from which indeed I do not believe it differs fundamentally.

*

Being one rainy day in an inn at the seaside, I found myself recalling how in childhood an imitation mahogany panel opposite my bed had served as optical excitant of a somnolence vision, and I was struck by the obsession now being imposed on my irritated gaze by the floor, the cracks of which had been deepened by countless scrubbings. I

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thereupon decided to examine the symbolism of this obsession and, to assist my meditative and hallucinatory powers, I obtained from the floor-boards a series of drawings by dropping upon them anyhow pieces of paper I then rubbed with blacklead. I emphasize the fact that the drawings thus obtained steadily lose, thanks to a series of suggestions and transmutations occurring to one spontaneously—similarly to what takes place in the production of hypnagogical visions—the character of the material being studied—wood—and assume the aspect of unbelievably clear images of a nature probably able to reveal the first cause of the obsession or to produce a simulacrum thereof. My curiosity being thus aroused and marvelling, I was led to examine in the same way, but indiscriminately, many kinds of material happening to be in my field of vision—leaves and their veins, the unravelled edges of sackcloth, the palette-knife markings on a “modern” picture, thread unrolled from its spool, &c., &c. I have put together under the title of *Natural History* the first fruits of the *frottage* process from *Sea and Rain to Eve, the Only One Remaining to Us*. Later on, it was thanks to restricting my own active participation ever more and more, so as thereby to increase the active share of the powers of the mind, that I succeeded in looking on *like a spectator* at the birth of pictures such as : *Women Shouting as They Ford a River, Vision Provoked by the Words : “The Immovable Father,” Man Walking on the Water, Taking a Girl by the Hand and Shoving Past Another; Vision Provoked by a Sheet of Blotting-Paper, &c.* (*Surrealism and Painting*, by André Breton, contains reproductions of some of the works of this period).

At first it seemed as if the *frottage* process could be used only for drawing. If one takes into consideration that it has since been successfully adapted to the technical media of painting (scratching of pigments on a ground prepared in colours and placed over an uneven surface, &c.) without the slightest liberty being taken with the principle of the intensification of the mind’s powers of irritability, I think I am entitled to say without exaggeration that surrealism has enabled painting to travel with seven-league boots a long way from Renoir’s three apples, Manet’s four sticks of asparagus, Derain’s little chocolate women, and the Cubists’ tobacco-packet, and to open up for it a field of *vision* limited only by the *irritability capacity of the mind’s powers*. Needless

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to say, this has been a great blow to art critics, who are terrified to see the importance of the "author" being reduced to a minimum and the conception of "talent" abolished. Against them, however, we maintain that surrealist painting is within the reach of everybody who is attracted by real revelations and is therefore ready to assist inspiration or make it work to order.

We do not doubt that in yielding quite naturally to the vocation of pushing back appearances and upsetting the relations of "realities," it is helping, with a smile on its lips, to hasten the general crisis of consciousness due in our time.

PAUL ELUARD

LADY LOVE

*She is standing on my lids
And her hair is in my hair
She has the colour of my eye
She has the body of my hand
In my shade she is engulfed
As a stone against the sky*

She will never close her eyes
And she does not let me sleep
And her dreams in the bright day
Make the suns evaporate
And me laugh cry and laugh
Speak when I have nothing to say

OUT OF SIGHT IN THE DIRECTION OF MY BODY

All the trees all their boughs all their leaves
The grass at the base the rocks the massed houses
Afar the sea that thine eye washes
Those images of one day and the next
The vices the virtues that are so imperfect
The transparence of men that pass in the streets of
hazard
And women that pass in a fume from thy dour
questing

PAUL ELUARD

Love, is man unfinished.

SCARCELY DISFIGURED

Farewell sadness
Greeting sadness
Thou art inscribed in the lines of the ceiling
Thou art inscribed in the eyes that I love
Thou art not altogether want
For the poorest lips denounce thee
Smiling
Greeting sadness
Love of the bodies that are lovable
Mightiness of love that lovable
Starts up as a bodiless beast
Head of hope defeated
Sadness countenance of beauty

THE INVENTION

*The right hand winnows the sand
Every transformation is possible.*

PAUL ELUARD

*Afar on the stones the sun whets his fever to have
done
The description of the landscape is not very
important
The pleasant space of harvesting and no longer.*

*Clear with my two eyes
As water and fire.*

**

*What is the role of the root ?
Despair has broken all his bonds
He carries his hands to his head
One seven one four one two one one
A hundred women in the street
Whom I shall never see again.*

**

The art of living, liberal art, the art of dying well, the art of thinking, incoherent art, the art of smoking, the art of enjoying, the art of the Middle Ages, decorative art, the art of reasoning, the art of reasoning well, poetic art, mechanic art, erotic art, the art of being a grandfather, the art of the dance, the art of seeing, the art of being accomplished, the art of caressing, Japanese art, the art of playing, the art of eating, the art of torturing.

**

Yet I have never found what I write in what I love.

(Rehearsals, 1922)

PAUL ELUARD

DEFINITION

A live man mounted on a live horse meets a live woman leading a live dog.

A LIFE UNCOVERED or THE HUMAN PYRAMID

First, I had experienced a great need of solemnity and pomp. I was cold. All my living rotting being aspired to the majesty and rigidity of the dead. Next, I was tempted by a mystery in which forms play no part. Desirous of a colourless sky from which clouds and birds are banished. I became slave of the pure faculty of seeing, slave of my unreal virginal eyes innocent of the world and of themselves. I suppressed the visible and the invisible, I lost myself in a transparent mirror. Indestructible, I was not blind.

THE QUEEN OF DIAMONDS

At an early age I opened my arms to purity. It was only a beating of wings in the sky of my eternity, a beating of the loving heart that beats in the breast that is vanquished. I could never fall again. Loving love. Verily, light is glare. I have sufficient store thereof within me to behold night, the whole night, all nights.

All virgins are different. I dream always of a virgin.

At school she is on the bench before me, she wears

PAUL ELUARD

a black pinafore. When she turns round to ask me for the solution of a problem, the innocence of her eyes confounds me to such a degree that she, taking pity on my agitation, passes her arms about my neck.

Elsewhere, she leaves me. She boards a boat. We are scarcely acquainted, but her youth is so extreme that her kiss does not at all surprise me.

Or else, when she is ill, it is her hand that I hold in mine, until I die, until I awake.

I hasten with all the more speed to tryst with her as I fear lest other thoughts should kidnap me before I can reach her.

Once, the world was coming to an end and we were entirely unaware of our love. With slow fond movements of her head she sought my lips. That night for a moment I believed that I would bring her up to the light of day.

And it is always the same avowal, the same youthfulness, the same pure eyes, the same ingenuous gesture of the arms about my neck, the same caress, the same revelation.

But it is never the same woman.

The cards said that I shall meet her in life, but *without recognizing her.*

Loving love.

(1926)

DO THOU SLEEP

To-day I must elucidate the nature of the victory gained by my dreams, and I say victory because to lie down beside a strange being in surroundings so unexpected and distasteful as, for example, a kitchen or a gallery, yields me a glimpse of the bounds of life and leaves me with nothing further to suffer unless it be death.

PAUL ELUARD

A very young, very unhappy woman, having on her side the twilight beauty of beings who give themselves, who abandon themselves because it is thus that they shall undo him who receives them. Having on her side the twilight beauty of beings whose innocence is absolute because they do not reckon what they have lived, nor what they have yet to live. She is there to receive me, me and that innocence that I have not lost, seeing that I sleep, seeing that I am at the mercy of a love not new but eternal, lord over me, from the birth to the death of the night.

Vows without reason, all having been promised. No more cares. Serious without cares, without vows. We do not laugh, because we have no need to defend ourselves. We love each other in the scourings of waking life: schoolrooms, quarrels, threatening money, habitual presences, the kitchen, the table, work, journeys, clothes. Nakedness herself dazzles us not. There is no longer the effort to prevent brightness from distressing brightness, the grey sky from dissolving into blue sky. This woman that I discover as I fall asleep, like a black star in deliverance from day, knows only in herself that of which I am ignorant in myself. Her very bland flesh affirms the pleasure that she finds in my caresses, but affirms it only from the pinnacle of her virtue: neither wins, nor loses, nor risks, nor is certain. The will is no longer the mask removed, nor the eyes opened. She does not ask me to abdicate, nor to insist. I am delivered, truly delivered, unto the reality of a mirror that does not reflect my appearance. Delivered unto her desires. I assume myself the prey. Without yesterday or to-morrow. That pure face recommences.

The greatest day of my life, always.

(1930)

PAUL ELUARD

SECOND NATURE

*In honour of the dumb the blind the deaf
Shouldering the great black stone
The things of time passing simply away*

*But then for the others knowing things by their names
The sear of every metamorphosis
The unbroken chain of dawns in the brain
The implacable cries shattering words*

*Furrowing the mouth furrowing the eyes
Where furious colours dispel the mists of vigil
Set up love against life that the dead dream of
The low-living share the others are slaves
Of love as some are slaves of freedom*

(Love, Poetry, 1929)

SCENE

*At the hour when the first symptoms of mental
 viduity make themselves felt
A negro is to be seen always the same negro
In a most thoroughfare ostensibly swanking a red tie
He always sports the same beige hat
He has the features of spite he looks at no one
And no one looks at him*

*I love neither roads nor mountains nor forests
Bridges leave me cold
I do not see their arches as eyes I am not in the habit
 of walking on brows
I am in the habit of walking in quarters where there
 are the most women
And then I am interested only in women
The negro also for at the hour when boredom and
Daunt and detach me from desires fatigue*

PAUL ELUARD

From myself

Then I meet him always
I am detached he is spiteful
His tie is certainly wrought iron with a coat of
False forge fire *red-lead*
But whether or not he is there out of spite
It is certain that I only notice him for want of
something better to do

The shadows are yoked to an obvious determination
to see nothing

But forth from its nest the evening staggers
What is that signal those signals those alarms
It is the last astonishment of the evening
The women departing slip off their chemises of light
All of a single sudden not a soul remains
When we are gone the light is alone

**

The carmine loft has nooks of jade
And jasper if the eye shuns nacre
The mouth is the mouth of the blood the elder
Cranes its neck for the milk of the blade
A flint has cowed the tempestuous night
Risk infant trips up daring
Stones on the stubble birds on the tiles
Fire in the harvests in the breasts
Playing with the pollen of the breath of the night
Hewn at the hands of the winds the water
Catches up her skirts and the scrolls of wave
Set the spark of dawn aflame
And in her black bodice a corpse seduces
The scarabs of the grass and of the dead boughs

**

In a so thoroughfare

PAUL ELUARD

ALL-PROOF
Universe-Solitude

1

*A woman every night
Journeys secretly.*

2

*Villages of weariness
Where the arms of girls are bare
As jets of water
Where their youth increasing in them
Laughs and laughs and laughs on tiptoe*

*Villages of weariness
Where everybody is the same.*

3

*To see the eyes that cloister you
And the laughter that receives you.*

4

*I want to kiss thee I do kiss thee
I want to leave thee thou art tired
But when our strengths are at the ebb
Thou puttest on an armour more perilous than an
arm.*

5

*The body and the profane honours
Incredible conspiracy
Of the angles soft as wings.
But the hand caressing me
It is my laughter that unclasps it
It is my throat that clings to it
That ends it*

PAUL ELUARD

*Incredible conspiracy
Of the discoveries and surprises.*

6

*Phantom of thy nudity
Phantom child of thy simplicity
Child victor carnal sleep
Of unreal liberties.*

7

*It is the breath the yestersun
Joining thy lips
And it is the caress the fresh caress
To scour the frail seas of thy shame
To fashion them in gloom
It is the mirrors of jasmine
The problem of calm.*

8

*Disarmed
She knows of no enemy.*

9

*She stretches herself
That she may feel less alone.*

10

*I admired descending upon thee
Time in the chariot of space
Our memories transported me

Much room is denied thee
For ever with me.*

11

*Rending her kisses and her fears
She wakes in the night
To wonder at all that has replaced her.*

Confessions

I

*Simplicity yea even to write
To-day at least the hand is there*

2

*It is meet to scrutinize
The inquisitive
When one is weary*

3

*The violence of sea-winds
Ships old faces
A permanent abode
Weapons to defend one
A shot one only
Stupefaction of the father
Dead this long time*

4

*All these people eat
They are gluttonous they are happy
The more they laugh the more they eat*

5

*Above the hat-wear
A regiment of ospreys gallops past
It is a regiment of foot-wear
All the disillusioned fetishists and their complete
Off to the devil collections*

6

*Cataclysms of gold well-gotten
And of silver ill-gotten*

PAUL ELUARD

7

*The birds perfume the woods
The rocks their great nocturnal lakes*

8

*Play at profile and win
Let a bird abide in its wings*

9

*Rapt
I dwell in this thorn and my claw alights
On the sweet breasts of poverty and crime*

10

*Why are they made to run
They are not made to run
Arriving underdue
Departing overdue
What a road back
When slowness takes a hand
Proofs of the contrary
And futility*

11

*Gold-filings a treasure a platinum
Puddle deep in a horrible valley
Whose denizens have lost their hands
It takes the players out of themselves*

12

*The drawing-room with its black tongue licks its
master
Embalms him performs the office of eternity*

13

The Beresina forded by a sandy jug-dugged woman

PAUL ELUARD

14

*He takes her in his arms
Bright gleams for a second playing
On the shoulder-blades the shoulders and the breasts
Then hidden by a cloud.
She carries her hand to her heart
She pales she quakes
Whose then was the cry
But he if he still lives
He shall be rediscovered
In a strange town*

15

*The blood flowing on the flags
Furnishes me with sandals
I sit on a chair in the middle of the street
I observe the little Creole girls
Coming out of school smoking pipes*

16

Do not see reality as I am

17

*All life even as an agate has poured itself
Into the seams of my countenance and cast
A death-mask of unrivalled beauty*

18

*The black trees the white trees
Are younger than nature
In order to recover this freak of birth one must
Age*

19

*Fatal sun of the quick
One cannot keep thy heart*

(*The Immediate Life, 1932*)

(Rendered into English by Samuel Beckett)



A Cold Night (*Drawing by Yves Tanguy*).

SURREALISM AND MADNESS

Madness there still is, "the madness that is put into a strait jacket," as it has been so well called, or perhaps another variety. . . . It is well known that lunatics owe their being shut up to only a small number of legally reprehensible actions, and that, if they fail to commit one or other of these actions, their freedom (what is visible of their freedom) cannot be interfered with. I will grant that lunatics are to some extent the victims of their imagination, in that their imagination impels them to infringe certain rules outside the limits of which, as every citizen is expected to know, the race feels itself threatened. But the complete indifference of lunatics to the way the rest of us criticize their behaviour, and even to the various disciplinary measures which are taken against them, allows one to suppose that they find their imagination to be a great comfort and sufficiently enjoy their delirium to be able to put up with its being valid for them alone. On this account, hallucinations, illusions, &c., are not a negligible source of pleasure. The most highly organized sensuality takes advantage of them, and on some evenings I myself am all disposed to subdue the charming and attractively mischievous hand which is referred to in the closing pages of Taine's *Intelligence*. I could devote my life to persuading lunatics to confide in me. They are so scrupulously honest, and their innocence is only equalled by my own. It had to be with lunatics that Columbus set out to

SURREALISM AND MADNESS

discover America. And consider how that act of madness was to take form and permanence.

(André Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism*)

*

The modern mind requires more than facts : it requires poetic facts. For that matter, when we get an emotive acquaintance of the object we apprehend it more vividly than we do through any realistic description. . . . Poe was the first to realize this, as he was to understand that a scientific treatise differs from a poem in that the purpose of the latter is to give an indistinct pleasure. Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valéry, have all tended more and more to isolate in poetry the essence thereof. Concerned to suggest a mood, a state of reverie, they have necessarily been led into a certain obscurity of expression, so that more and more the poem has been taking on an air of unreality. Finally, the surrealists have seen how the qualities which they regard as of paramount importance—*inventiveness* and *creative spontaneity*—are shackled by the rigidity of the intellect, and, understanding that the intellect is no more than a function of reality, they have accordingly denied that either reality or intellect is supreme. They want to speak the words of the unconscious, as the sybil spoke the words of the god; hence the licence of their grammatical and perspective deformations, the free rein they give to associative thought, and their refusal to trust in either the criticism of the self or the test by reality. On that account, the image, which results from the method, has assumed such importance that one is justified in saying there is a doctrine of the image in modern poetry. Modern poetry consists almost entirely of images.

(Jean Frois-Wittmann, " Psycho-Analytical Considerations on Modern Art " in *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*)

*

We who are surrealists insist on celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of hysteria, the greatest poetical discovery of the end of the nineteenth century, and on celebrating it at the very moment when the dismembering of the concept of hysteria seems complete. Preferring above all the hysterical young, the perfect type of whom is furnished in the study of the delightful X. L. (Augustine), who entered the Salpêtrière Hospital (in Dr. Charcot's wards) on October 21, 1875, aged fifteen and a half years, how could we be affected by the laborious refutation of organic disturbances, the indictment of which will never be, except in the eyes of doctors alone, the indictment of hysteria? How pathetic! M. Babinski, the most intelligent man to have tackled this question, dared to publish in 1913 the following: "When an emotion is sincere and profound, and stirs the human soul, there is no room for hysteria." And in that we have so far the best we have been given to learn.

Does Freud, who owes so much to Charcot, remember the time when, according to the survivors, the resident doctors at the Salpêtrière mixed up their professional duty with their taste for sex, and when at dusk the patients either met these doctors outside the hospital or admitted them to their own beds? Later these resident doctors would carefully enumerate, in the interests of (self-evidently justified) medical science, the passionate and so-called pathological attitudes which were to them, and are still humanly to us, so precious. Can it be that fifty years later the Nancy School is no more? If Dr. Luys is still alive, has he forgotten? But, then, what has become of Néri's notes on the Messina earthquake? And what has happened to the Zouaves torpedoed by the Raymond Roussel of science, Clovis Vincent?

SURREALISM AND MADNESS

To the various definitions of hysteria so far put forward, of divine hysteria in Antiquity, of infernal in the Middle Ages, from the possessed of Ludin to the flagellants of Our Lady of Sorrows (Long live Madame Chantelouve !), to the mythical, erotic or merely lyrical definitions, and to the social and learned definitions, how obviously superior are Bernheim's words, "that complex and proteiform disease called hysteria and defying all definition."

Those who have seen the splendid film, *Witchcraft Through the Ages*, must remember having drawn from either the screen or their fellow-spectators more vivid instruction than is contained in the writings of Hippocrates, of Plato (in the latter the womb leaps like a kid), of Galen (who treats the kid as stationary), or of Fernel (who sets the kid going again in the sixteenth century and feels it beneath his hand rising as high as the stomach); they have seen the horns of the Beast grow and grow until they became the horns of the devil, and then in turn the devil failed. His heritage the positivist hypotheses were to divide up among themselves. The hysterical crisis took shape at the expense of hysteria proper, with its wonderful aura, and its four stages, the third of which is as fascinating as the most expressive and pure *tableaux vivants*, i.e. its perfectly simple resolution in normal existence. In 1906, traditional hysteria sheds its symptoms. "Hysteria," says Babinski, "is a pathological condition manifested by disturbances which in certain subjects can be reproduced with complete exactness and are apt to vanish under the influence of persuasion (counter-suggestion) alone."

For us, however, this definition defines only a moment in the becoming of hysteria. The dialectical process which produced it is still going on. Ten years later, deplorably disguised as pithiatism, hysteria

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tends to regain its prerogatives. The doctor is surprised. He seeks to deny a thing outside his province.

Accordingly, in 1928, we put forward a fresh definition of hysteria, as follows :

“Hysteria is a more or less irreducible mental condition, marked by the subversion, quite apart from any delirium-system, of the relations established between the subject and the moral world under whose authority he believes himself to be practically. This mental condition is based on the need of a reciprocal seduction, which explains the hastily accepted miracles of medical suggestion (or counter-suggestion). Hysteria is not a pathological phenomenon and may in all respects be considered as a supreme means of expression.”

(Louis Aragon and André Breton, “The Fiftieth Anniversary of Hysteria” in *The Surrealist Revolution*)

*

One must never have set foot in an asylum to be unaware that lunatics are *made* there as ruffians are made in reformatories. What could be more hateful than the so-called apparatuses of social preservation which, for a peccadillo, a first external lapse from decorum or common sense, thrust some case among other cases, whose propinquity can be but harmful, and especially deprive him systematically of relations with all those whose moral or practical sense is better balanced than his own? According to the newspapers, at the last International Congress of Psychiatry and in the very opening sitting, the delegates present unanimously condemned the persistence of the popular notion that still to-day it is no easier to leave an asylum than formerly a convent; that are kept there for life people who never had or no longer have any

SURREALISM AND MADNESS

business there; and that the public safety is not so generally involved as it is implied. And thereupon each of the alienists protested, insisted on one or two cases of release to his credit, and, especially, supplied with a great to-do some examples of disaster which had followed on the unsuitable or premature return to freedom of certain serious cases.

Since they are always more or less held to blame in such affairs, the alienists clearly indicated that when they were in doubt they preferred inaction. But it seems to me that in the form they gave it the question at issue is not clear. The atmosphere of asylums is such that it cannot fail to have the most weakening and pernicious influence over those living in it and that it must have this in the very direction their original weakness has led them. Add to this that any complaint, any protest, or any sign of intolerance, only results in getting you accused of unsociability (for, paradoxical as it may be, you are expected in this department to be sociable) and serves only for the formation of a new symptom against you, and it is evident that the atmosphere is not only of a kind to prevent your recovery, if otherwise that were likely to supervene, but is also bound not to allow your condition to remain stationary, but, on the contrary, will make it grow rapidly worse. Hence those tragically rapid developments which can be watched in asylums and which, very often, cannot be those of a single disease.

Attention should be called to the process, as regards mental diseases, of this almost inevitable transition from the acute attack to the chronic condition. Considering the extraordinary and belated infancy of psychiatry, it is idle to speak in any degree of a cure being effected in these conditions. I believe that the most conscientious psychiatrists do not even bother

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about it. No doubt, arbitrary confinement, in the habitual meaning of the term, is a thing of the past, since a patent and objectively observable event, which must be abnormal and committed as far as possible in the open street, is the cause of every one of these detentions which are a thousand times more horrible than the others. But to my mind all confinements are arbitrary. I continue to be unable to see why a human being should be deprived of his freedom. They shut up Sade, they shut up Nietzsche, they shut up Baudelaire. The business of coming and surprising you in the night and of putting you into a strait-jacket or otherwise securing you is on a par with the habit of the police of slipping a revolver into your pocket.

(André Breton, *Nadja*)

MEDICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL RECORDS The Journal of Mental Derangement and of Lego-Medical Treatment of the Deranged

NOTES

SELF-DEFENCE

In the previous number of the *Medico-Psychological Records*, Dr. A. Rodiet spoke in the course of an interesting note of the professional risks run by the asylum doctor. He mentioned some recent attacks on several of our fellow-doctors and he considered what means could be taken to protect us effec-

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tively from the peril represented by the psychiatrist's permanent contact with the lunatic and his family.

But the lunatic and his family constitute a danger which I shall call "endogenous"; it is bound up with our job and is its obligatory corollary. We just accept it. But there is another danger of a different kind which I shall call "exogenous" and which particularly deserves our attention. It seems to call for our serious concern.

Here is an especially significant example of this second kind of danger. One of my patients, suffering from the manias of complaint and persecution, a most dangerous man, suggested with delicate irony that I should read a book which was being freely allowed in the hands of other lunatics. It was a book recently published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and appeared guaranteed by this imprint and its decent and innocent look. It was André Breton's *Nadja*. Within its pages surrealism bloomed: it contained the surrealist's intentional incoherence, his skilfully disconnected chapters, and that delicate art of making a fool of the reader. In the midst of strangely symbolical drawings we came upon the photograph of Professor Claude. One chapter indeed was quite specially devoted to us. In this the unfortunate psychiatrists were abundantly insulted and one passage (blue-pencilled by the patient who had so amiably given me the book) attracted my attention. It read, "I know that if I were insane, and had been shut up for a few days, I should take advantage of a temporary remission of my delirium to murder calmly some one or other, the doctor for preference, whom I found within my reach. I should thereby benefit at least through being placed, as the agitated patients are, in a compartment to myself. I should then perhaps be left in peace."

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There could not be a more definite incitement to murder. Yet it will only arouse our silent contempt or perhaps it will hardly disturb our nonchalant indifference.

An appeal to higher authority in such cases seems to us so like a sign of misplaced kicking over the traces that we should not even think of resorting to it. And yet such attacks on us are being repeated daily.

I consider that our inertia is greatly to blame. Our silence may lead our good faith to be questioned and it encourages every kind of impudence.

Why should not the professional societies to which we belong, our friendly society for instance, take action with regard to such incidents, whether there has been a collective or an individual act ? Why should we not send a protest to the publisher who brings out such a work as *Nadja*; why not attempt legal proceedings against an author who has infringed the limits of decorum in relation to us ? I think (and it would be our sole means of defence) it would be worth while considering, within, for example, the membership of our friendly society, the appointment of a committee to deal specially with these questions.

Dr. Rodier ended his note by saying : “ The asylum doctor may justly claim to be protected unreservedly by the society he himself defends . . . ”

But society seems sometimes to forget the reciprocity of its duties. It is our business to recall it to those duties.

PAUL ABÉLY.

SURREALISM AND MADNESS

MEDICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Meeting of October 28, 1929

M. Abély having read a paper on the behaviour of authors who call themselves surrealists and on their attacks upon alienist doctors, the paper led to the following discussion :

DISCUSSION

DR. DE CLÉRAMBAULT : I ask Professor Janet what connexion he establishes between the cases' mental condition and the characteristics of their productions.

M. P. JANET : The surrealists' manifesto contains an interesting philosophical introduction. The surrealists contend that reality is ugly by definition; beauty exists only in what is not real. It is man who has introduced beauty into the world. To produce the beautiful, one must go as far away as possible from the real.

The surrealists' writings are chiefly the confessions of obsessed persons and doubters.

DR. DE CLÉRAMBAULT : It seems to me that from a *technical* point of view excessivist artists launching impertinent crazes, perhaps by means of manifestoes which condemn all tradition, can be described, whatever they may call themselves (and let the art and the period concerned be what they may), as "Processists." Processism consists in saving oneself the trouble of thinking, and especially the trouble of observing, and in relying on a predetermined manner or formula to produce an effect which is itself single,

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schematic and conventional. Thus one may have a rapid output, with all the appearance of having a style of one's own, and yet forestall the criticisms which a resemblance to life would invite. This degradation of work is most easily discerned in the domain of the plastic arts; but in the verbal domain it can be recognized just as well.

That species of arrogant laziness which engenders or fosters Processism is not peculiar to our time. In the sixteenth century, the Concettists, the Gongorists and Euphuists, and, in the seventeenth century, the Precious, have all been processists. Vadius and Trissotin [in Molière's comedy *Les Femmes Savantes*] were both processists, albeit processists more moderate and more laborious than those of our day, perhaps because they wrote for a more select and erudite public.

In the plastic domains, the rise of processism seems to have occurred only in the last century.

M. P. JANET : In support of M. de Clérambault's opinion, I will mention some surrealist processes. The surrealists will for example take five words at random out of a hat and with these five words they will make series of associations. In the Introduction to Surrealism, a whole story is expounded with the two words : turkey and tophat.

M. DE CLÉRAMBAULT : In the course of his exposition, M. Abély told you about a libellous attack. The point is worth commenting.

Being libelled is an essential one among the professional risks run by alienists; we are libelled from time to time either owing to our administrative duties or to our position as experts : it would only be fair if the authorities which appoint us also protected us.

.....

.....

.....

.....

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The technician should be protected by plainly specified measures against all professional risks of every kind and he should be assured of immediate and permanent assistance. Such risks are not only material, they may be moral. As a protection against them there should be assistance, subsidies, juridical and judicial support, compensations, and even a sometimes permanent and complete pension. Where a case is urgent, the cost of supplying assistance could be covered by a Mutual Insurance Fund. But in the last resort such costs should be borne by the authorities in whose service the damage has been suffered.

.....

The meeting rose at six o'clock.

One of the secretaries :

GUIRAUD.

(*Medico-Psychological Records*, November 1929)

*

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“... But I shall protest, but I shall call down infamy on the witness for the prosecution, I shall cover him with shame! Can one imagine a witness for the prosecution? ... How horrible! Only among humanity are there such examples of monstrosity! Can there be a more refined, a more civilized barbarism than giving evidence for the prosecution? ...

“In Paris there are two caves, one of robbers and the other of murderers; the robbers' cave is the Stock Exchange, the murderers' cave is the Courts of Justice.”

PÉTRUS BOREL.

To my knowledge ten newspapers, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, *L'Œuvre*, *Paris-Midi*, *Le Soir*, *Le Canard Enchaîné*, *Le Progrès Médical*, the *Vossische Zeitung*, *Le Rouge et le Noir*, *La Gazette de Bruxelles*, and *Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme*, have reported the controversy started by the Medico-Psychological Society concerning the passage from my book *Nadja*.

Most of these newspapers wished to make fun of the incident and they were content to comment upon M. Pierre Janet's ridiculous statement: “The surrealists' writings are chiefly the confessions of obsessed persons and doubters,” and to serve up again the jokes which are indeed always suitable each time the alienist claims to have fault to find with the lunatic, the colonist with the colonized, and the detective with him whom by chance or otherwise he arrests. But nobody has appeared to do justice to Dr. de Clérambault's amazing claim. Not content with invoking the surrealists, a set of people who, according to him, bother only about “saving themselves the trouble of thinking” (*sic*), this doctor has not hesitated to contend that the alienist should be protected against the risk of being made to retire prematurely... if he so little as kills an escaped or freed patient by whom he

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considers he is threatened. In such an event, some solid pecuniary compensation should, it seems, be made. Evidently, psychiatrists, being accustomed to treat lunatics like dogs, are surprised to find that they are not allowed, even when not on duty, to shoot them down.

It is easy to understand from his assertion how M. de Clérambault has not found any better way of giving scope to his brilliant gifts than within the prison organization and it becomes obvious why he bears the title of Physician-in-Chief to the special infirmary of the receiving prison close to the Préfecture of Police. It would be strange if a conscience of this mettle, a mind of this quality, had not found the means of placing himself entirely at the disposal of the middle-class police and middle-class justice. May I say, however, that in the eyes of some people such a post is sufficiently compromising for it to be impossible, without insulting science, to consider as *scientists* men who, in the same way as the scandalous M. Amy, of the Almazian affair, are foremost bent on being instruments of social repression? Indeed, I maintain that a man must have lost all sense of human dignity (indignity) to dare to appear at the Assizes in the role of *expert*. We all remember the edifying controversy which took place between expert alienists during the trial of the criminal mother-in-law, Mme. Lefèvre, at Lille. During the War, I was able to see what account the military courts took of the medico-legal reports,—I mean, what account the alienist experts put up with seeing taken of their reports, since they continued to give their opinions even when the severest sentences sometimes reprimanded their rare applications for acquittal, applications based on their recognition of the accused's complete "irresponsibility."

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How can one believe that the civilian law is any the more enlightened and that the experts are morally in any better position, since (1) article 64 of the French Penal Code only allows the accused to be regarded as innocent in the event it is shown that he "was demented at the time of his act, or that he was compelled to perform this act by a force he was unable to resist" (a wording philosophically incomprehensible); (2) that scientific "objectivity," which is described as ancillary to the law's illusory "impartiality," is (in the realm with which we are dealing) in itself Utopian; (3) that of course, since society does not really seek to strike at the guilty, but at the anti-social, person, what has foremost to be done is to satisfy public opinion, a foul beast incapable of seeing that a breach should not be punished because he who committed it was ill only during this breach, so that confinement on medical grounds, which may at a pinch be allowed as a punishment, is no longer to be excused? *

So I maintain that the doctor who in such circumstances is willing to give his opinion in court must, unless he appears regularly to assert the complete irresponsibility of accused persons, be either an idiot or a cad—i.e. the same thing.

On the other hand, considering from a purely psychological point of view the recent advance made in the treatment of mental diseases, it is evident that the main development has been the increasingly abusive condemnation of what, following Bleuler, has been called *autism* (egocentricity), a condemnation most convenient for the middle-classes, since it enables one to regard as pathological everything in man which is not his mere adaptation to the external conditions of

* Hence the totally unjustified, the Jesuitical, the sickening notion of "diminished responsibility."

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life, since its purpose is to wear down secretly all cases of disobedience, insubordination, or desertion, which have or have not so far appeared worthy of respect (poetry, art, passionate love, revolutionary action, &c.). Accordingly, for M. Janet, and no doubt for M. Claude too, it is at the moment the surrealists who must be autists. And an autist also just earlier must have been that young professor of physics who was examined at the Val-de-Grâce (the military hospital in Paris) because, having been posted to the *n*th Aviation Regiment, he "had very soon displayed his absence of interest in the Army and had told his fellow-soldiers that he looked upon war as horrible, since in his eyes it was but organized murder." (The case, according to Professor Fribourg-Blanc, who gives the results of his study of it in the *Records of Legal Medicine* for February, 1930, presented "marked schizoidal tendencies.") As to that, please note that the case was found to display "a desire to be alone, interiorization, a disinclination for all practical activities, a morbid individualism, and idealist notions of universal brotherhood.") And, on these gentlemen's vile testimony, autists also very soon, i.e. liable to be turned aside at any moment from the road their sole conscience has led them to take, i.e. liable to be *confiscated at will*, will be all who insist on not adopting the watchwords behind which the community lurks to try to enforce upon everybody without exception a participation in its misdeeds.

We consider it is due to our honour to be the first to call attention to this danger and to make a stand against the unbearable, the increasing, abuse of power by people whom we are inclined to look upon as being not so much doctors as jailers and indeed as purveyors of penal settlements and scaffolds. *Because they are doctors*, we hold them to be less guiltless than others

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when they proceed indirectly with their low executioner's business. Surrealists or "Processists" though we may be in their eyes, we cannot urge them too strongly, even if some of them are doomed to be struck down accidentally by the blows of those whom they seek arbitrarily to control, to have the decency to shut up.

(André Breton, "The Treatment of Mental Disease and Surrealism" in *Surrealism in the Service of the Revolution*)

*

Surrealism now aims at "re-creating a condition which will be in no way inferior to mental derangement." Its ambition is to lead us to the edge of madness and make us feel what is going on in the magnificently disordered minds of those whom the community shuts up in asylums. Is it not possible experimentally, by a simple play of the mind, to attain to the same result attained in psychoses and neuroses? May one not succeed in "systematizing confusion," as Salvador Dali puts it, "and so assist the total discrediting of the world of reality"?

It is in reply to these questions that André Breton and Paul Eluard have supplied in their latest work, *The Immaculate Conception*, some extremely remarkable simulations of mental feebleness, acute mania, general paralysis, interpretational delirium, and *dementia praecox*....

In having done this, they have given a proof of the omnipotence of mind and provided an effective remedy to the everyday life which an idiotic pragmatism is seeking to deify.

In this connexion, we must not fail to note Professor Janet's singular assertion during a discussion at the meeting of the Medico-Psychological Society on

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October 28, 1929. He then considered himself entitled to say that the works of surrealist writers are the "confessions of obsessed persons and doubters." Could anything be funnier? It must be admitted that the enthusiasm with which certain psychiatrists discover pathological features in everything which is not "mere adaptation to the external conditions of life" is very queer and looks very much like a most regrettable bias on behalf of social protection.

(Henri Baranger, "Surrealism in 1931," in *Le Centaure*, a supplement to *L'Encéphale*)

*

The experiments some writers have made with a mode of writing which they call surrealist and the method of which they have described very scientifically,* show to what a remarkable degree of autonomy automatic writing may attain quite apart from hypnosis.† Now, it is possible for certain frameworks to be established in advance for these productions, e.g. a synthetic rhythm or a sententious manner,‡ and yet the establishing of these frameworks does not in the least weaken the striking diversity of the images that come and fit into them.

(J. Lévy-Valensi, Pierre Migault and Jacques Lacan, "Inspired Writing: Schizography," in *Medico-Psychological Records*).

* André Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924).

† A. Breton and P. Eluard, *The Immaculate Conception* (1930).

‡ P. Eluard and B. Péret, *One Hundred and Fifty-two Proverbs adapted to the Contemporary Taste*; Robert Desnos, *Foundered with all Hands*.

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THE POSSESSIONS

The authors are particularly anxious that these three essays, intended for the specialist as well as for the lay reader, should be considered as constituting an absolutely sincere enterprise on their part; to suppose them in any way indebted to clinical texts, were it only to the extent of representing a more or less skilful pastiche of such texts, would be to presume them devoid of both necessity and efficacy.

They have not been tempted by the charms of the picturesque into reproducing naively the phraseology that is considered, rightly or wrongly, as the least expressive of the objects to which it is applied; nor have they been satisfied to point the authentic curiosity of such a phraseology; on the contrary, they hope to show that, given a state of *poetic* tension, the normal mind is capable of furnishing verbal material of the most profoundly paradoxical and eccentric nature, and it is possible for such a mind to harbour the main ideas of delirium without being permanently affected thereby or in any way jeopardized in its *faculty of equilibrium*.

What is more, no prejudice can be attached to the plausibility of mental states thus organized, our essential consideration being to suggest that with sufficient training they could be made perfectly plausible. And then good-bye to the arrogant

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categories in which one is pleased to confine men seriously concerned with human reasoning, with that very reasoning that denies us daily the right to express ourselves in the way required of us by our instinct. If my voice can lend itself successively to the speech of the most disparate beings, to the speech of the richest and poorest, the blind and the hallucinator, the coward and the aggressor, how then can I possibly admit that this voice, finally mine and mine alone, originates in regions that have, be it only for a time, been outlawed, regions to which I, in common with the majority of mankind, cannot hope ever to accede?

Furthermore, we are only too willing that these ten pages elaborated under the direction of certain confusional intentions, should be compared with the other pages of this number and the pages of other books described as surrealist. The concept of simulation holding good in psychiatry only in the event of war, being replaced at other times by that of "supersimulation," we are impatient to know to what morbid basis our structure shall be ascribed by those competent to form a judgement on this head.

Finally, we declare that we have derived a very special pleasure from this new exercise of our thought. It has enabled us to take cognizance, in ourselves, of hitherto unsuspected resources. And without desiring to invalidate in any way the promise it contains of future achievements in the most absolute liberty of action, we propose it, at least in the domain of modern poetics, as a very notable criterion. We would even go so far as to advocate its generalization and declare that, in our opinion, the "simulation essayed" of maladies virtual in each one of us could replace most advantageously the ballad, the sonnet, the epic, the poem without head or tail, and other decrepit modes.

SIMULATION OF MENTAL DEBILITY ESSAYED

I, alone of men, at the age of twenty-four, realized that he who would rise to an honourable position need not be more keenly alive to his worth than I was then to mine. I held, many years ago, that virtue is not valued at its due, but that my father was right when he desired that I should work my way out of the rut of my colleagues. Why foreign personages passing through France should receive the cross of the Legion of Honour is more than I can understand. It seems to me that this decoration should be reserved for gallant officers and mining engineers on graduation from the Polytechnical School. The Grand Master of the Order of Chivalry must indeed be deficient in common sense to discern merit where merit there is none. Of all distinctions of rank, officer is the most gratifying. Yet one cannot get on without one's diploma. My father gave his five children, both boys and girls, the best instruction and a good education. And it was not in order that they should be satisfied with a non-salaried position in a public department that does not pay its employees. Here is the proof of what I say : when, as was the case with my elder brother, who entered for newspaper competitions on more than one occasion, one is capable of carrying off the palm in the teeth of bachelors in Arts and Science, then it is a case of a chip of the old block and no error. But sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, says the proverb.

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In the inner pocket of my coat I have the drawings of a submarine that I am anxious to lay at the disposal of the National Defence. The commandant's cabin is marked in red and the torpedo-guns are the latest hydraulic model, with artesian control. The energy of champion cyclists is not greater than mine. I have no hesitation in saying that this invention cannot but prove a success. All men are partisans of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity and, let me add, mutual Solidarity. But that is no reason for not defending ourselves against those who attack us by sea.

I have written a *secret* letter on ministerial paper to the President of the Republic, requesting the favour of an interview. The Mediterranean Squadron is at present cruising off Constantinople, but the admiral grants leave too freely. However humbly a soldier may kneel before his superior officer, order is order. In the interests of discipline the leader must be just but firm. Stripes are not distributed promiscuously and Marshal Foch was Marshal Foch on his conspicuous merits. It was wrong of free thought not to devote itself to the service of France.

I am also anxious that another name should be found for the Marine Infantry. I have approached the League of the Rights of Man in this connexion. Such a title is unworthy of their blue collar. What is more, it is up to themselves to get themselves respected. The pride of the Greece of Sparta was made of sterner stuff. Anyhow, man believes in God and the hardest nuts have been known to ask for extreme unction, and that is something to be going on with.

SIMULATION OF GENERAL PARALYSIS ESSAYED

Thou my great one whom I adore beautiful as the whole earth and in the most beautiful stars of the earth that I adore thou my great woman adored by all the powers of the stars beautiful with the beauty of the thousands of millions of queens who adorn the earth the adoration that I have for thy beauty brings me to my knees to beg thee to think of me I am brought to my knees I adore thy beauty think of me thou my adorable beauty my great beauty whom I adore I roll the diamonds in the moss loftier than the forest whose most lofty hair of thine think of me —forget me not my little woman when possible at ingle-nook on the sand of emerald—look at thyself in my hand that keeps me steadfast on the whole world so that thou mayest recognize me for what I am my dark-fair woman my beautiful one my foolish one think of me in paradises my head in my hands.

They were not enough for me the hundred and twenty castles where we were going to love one another to-morrow they shall build me a hundred thousand more I have hunted forests of baobabs from thine eyes peacocks panthers and lyre-birds I will shut them up in my strongholds and we will go and walk together in the forests of Asia Europe Africa America that surround our castles in the admirable forests of thine eyes that are used to my splendour.

Thou hast not to wait for the surprise that I want to give thee for thine anniversary that falls to-day the same day as mine—I give it to thee at once since

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I have waited fifteen times for the year one thousand before giving thee the surprise of asking thee to think of me in hide-and-seek—I want thee laughing to think of me my young eternal woman. Before falling to sleep I have counted clouds and clouds of chariots full of beets for the sun and I want to bring thee to the astrakan shore that is being built on two horizons for thine eyes of petrol to wage war I will lead thee by paths of diamonds paved with primroses with emeralds and the cloak of ermine that I want to cover thee with is a bird of prey the diamonds that thy feet shall tread I got them cut in the shape of a butterfly.

Think of me whose only thought is the glory wherein the dazzling wealth of an earth and all the skies that I have conquered for thee slumber I adore thee and I adore thine eyes and I have opened thine eyes open to all those whom they have seen and I will give to all the beings whom thine eyes have seen raiment of gold and crystal raiment that they must cast away when thine eyes have tarnished them with their disdain. I bleed in my heart at the very initials of thy name that are all the letters beginning with *z* in the infinity of alphabets and civilizations where I will love thee still since thou art willing to be my woman and to think of me in the countries where there is no mean.

My heart bleeds on thy mouth and closes on thy mouth on all the red chestnut-trees of the avenue of thy mouth where we are on our way through the shining dust to lie us down amidst the meteors of thy beauty that I adore my great one who art so beautiful that I am happy to adorn my treasures with thy presence with thy thought and with thy name that multiplies the facets of the ecstasy of my treasures with thy name that I adore because it wakes an echo

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in all the mirrors of beauty of my splendour my original woman my scaffolding of rose-wood thou art the fault of my fault of my very great fault as Jesus Christ is the woman of my cross—twelve times twelve thousand one hundred and forty-nine times I have loved thee with passion on the way and I am crucified to north east west and north for thy kiss of radium and I want thee and in my mirror of pearls thou art the breath of him who shall not rise again to the surface and who loves thee in adoration my woman lying upright when thou art seated combing thyself.

Thou art coming thou thinkest of me thou art coming on thy thirteen full legs and on all thine empty legs that beat the air with the swaying of thine arms a multitude of arms that want to clasp me kneeling between thy legs and thine arms to clasp me without fear lest my locomotives should prevent thee from coming to me and I am thou and I am before thee to stop thee to give thee all the stars of the sky in one kiss on thine eyes all the kisses of the world in one star on thy mouth.

Thine in flames.

PS.—I would like a Street Directory for mass a Street Directory with a knotted cord to mark the place. Bring also a Franco-German flag that I may plant it in No Man's Land. And a pound of that chocolate with the little girl who sticks the placards (I forget). And then again nine of those little girls with their lawyers and their judges and come in the special train with the speed of light and the outlaws of the Far West to distract me for a moment who am popping here unfortunately like champagne corks. The left strap of my braces has just broken I was lifting the world as though it were a feather. Canst thou do something for me buy a tank I want to see thee coming like fairies.

SIMULATION OF THE DELIRIUM OF INTERPRETATION ESSAYED

When that love was finished and done with I was left as restless as *the bird on the bough*. I was good for nothing more. I perceived, none the less, that the scum of petrol on the water gave back my image and I observed how the curve of the *Pont au Change*, which is just beside the bird-market, was gradually magnified.

Thus it was one fine day that I crossed over once and for all to the other side of the rainbow, so intent was I on the fickle birds. Now I have nothing further to do on earth. No more than other birds I say that I have no further reason for committing myself on earth, *for accomplishing an act of winged presence on earth*. I refuse to join in the lusty song : "We perish for our leetle birds, be generous to your leetle birds."

The variegated shower speaks parrot. It has hatched forth a fledgling of wind with grain in its eyes. The sun raises and lowers its double eyelid on life. The claws of the birds on the pane of the sky are what I used to call stars. The earth itself, whose behaviour is inexplicable as long as one remains under the vault, is subject to the laws of migration.

The summer of feather is not over. The trap-doors have been opened and the harvests of down engulfed. The weather is *moulting*.

The cock of the steeple adorns the smoke rising from the fusillades, while the widow with the orange-

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coloured bosom betakes herself to the cemetery where the crosses are the microscopic stippling of Senegal diamonds, and man continues to *believe himself* on the face of the earth as the blackbird on the buffalo's back, on the face of the sea as the gull on the crest of the waves, the solid black bird and the liquid gull.

Horus, his finger on his lips, is the avalanche. I had not seen those fowlers seeking out men in the sky, taking wing from their nests with the stones they cast into the air.

The phoenices bring me my food of glow-worms and their wings incessantly dipping in the gold of the earth are the sea and the sky whose fires only show on stormy days, and they bury their crests of lightning in their feathers as they go to roost on the foot of the air.

The mills of the lightnings have broken their shells, in a snap of their wings they have taken to flight, the sand eats the dunes, the horizon shuns the clouds.

You will admit all the same that your *bed-coops*, and your twisted bars, and your pecked boards, and your nutmegs, and your latest model scarecrows, and your *telegraph-wires*, and your journeys in pigeon-holes, and the plinths of lamb of your statues of prey, and your *steeplechases* run in the twilight of robins on the wing, and the hours, and the minutes, and the seconds in your woodpeckers' heats, and your glorious conquests, all the same, your glorious cuckoos' conquests. All these gins of grace existed only that I might pass the barriers of danger, the barriers that separate fear from courage. Rely no more on me to help you to forget that your phantoms look like birds of paradise.

In the beginning was the song. Every one to the windows! Nothing more to be seen, from shore to

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shore, but Leda. My eddying wings are the doors through which she enters the neck of the swan, on the great deserted square that is the heart of the night-bird.

(*Rendered into English by Samuel Beckett*)

TRISTAN TZARA

M. ANTIPIRIN

at Ndumba at Tritriluloo at Nkogunlda
there is a large corona in which worms silently revolve
for worms and the other animals also have their woes
their sorrows their inspirations
look at the casement coiling even as camelopards
wheel hexagons increase tortoises climb
the moon swells marsupial and becomes a dog
a lily has blossomed in its anus
the cockatoo and the arara admire the dog
'tis the herd of shirt-clad mountains in our church
that are the
West Terminus and at Bucharest the steeds
have hanged themselves their fading eyes on Mbogo
who leaps on his bicycles while the telegraph tresses
grow tipsy
from out the ventriloquist's ears four chimney-sweeps
protrude and there and then
burst like melons
the photographer-priest was delivered of triplets
striped like fid-
dles trousers grow upon the hill a lunar-leaved histrio
swings in my cupboard
—child sweetheart with breasts of glass and ashen
parallel arms
mend my stomach the dolly must be sold
somewhere a bad lot has died
and we let the brains go on
the mouse diagonally scours the sky

TRISTAN TZARA

*the mustard flows from an almost pulped brain
we have become street-lamps
street-lamps
street-lamps
street-lamps
street-lamps
street-lamps
street-lamps
then they went*

(M. Antipyrin's First Celestial Adventure, 1916)

EVIL DESIRES THE KEY TO VERTIGO

*madame broke into a gallop
at the frontier whistle-blast
clean simple stenographed soul
included with rare collections of murders open free
under the table and within the nut to the public
squirrel
let us seek the lung dipped in black ink
animal elevator sailing-ships' bowels
docks banana cuba
thou goest
thou comest—and it is ever the gospel fragile ear
but to believe in the soul inner postal-order
with the barrack-brain of agile instincts
reduction ever reduction
reply-receipt he loves thee goodwill &c.
the jaded watching for the flash between the fingers
satanic infection yellows with tropical heat the planet
the wait for friends and other things
which are so reproved in the grammatical vocations
of the bottled jugglers*

(Cinema Calendar of the Abstract Heart
Houses, 1918)

LIKE A MAN

“Gnaw the electric torch’s bones, hitch the horses to the sidereal system, fish with bait.”

Thus Aa, breviary of live hypotheses.

In the machination of Venetian colour he prepares a bold irruption into century logic.

The wind ! The wind !

The age of the first personage, calcine the people slowly in sulphur, consume the flower of the soil, the key to the carburettor’s laugh, the rebellion wind land and sea, the wind of the canine race.

The wind ! The wind !

All brains contain oil, forget, swallow impurities and excretions, the occult flame shall be your food, body and fire are in his hands.

The wind ! The wind !

The fertile colour, the spacious sea, who shall pursue the hierarchy of their manufacture ? Broken on the basalt of tumours is the glassware, a long comet has slipped into the volcano’s maw. Rain of locusts, the psalms sprout in long beards from the barbarian’s mouth, in autumn, autumn which chokes the wells, an incontrovertible witness to the sunquake and at our feet.

Chalk dust ash.

(*The Antihead, 1919*)

THE APPROXIMATIVE MAN (VIII)

*I remember a sinuous disappointment drawing its
bitter substance from the past
sailing darkly goodness knows whither
sometimes on the song’s brow a mirror like a stiffened
childhood would open*

TRISTAN TZARA

spitting the image on the ground
and splintering splendid youth—bloodstains lurked
somewhere
on sheets polluted by belated twilights
feverish worms under the embers
I remember also that it was a day softer than a woman
I remember thee image of sin
frail solitude thou wouldest have defeated all the child-
hoods of the landscape
thou alone didst fail at the starlit call
I remember a clock cutting off heads to mark the
hours
the hours which await the lonely at crossroads
in every lonely passer-by there is torn one day the
crossroad of a day
and as the hour of love comes from the air goes back
to the air
each crossroad returns unto itself in another peaceful
with the air which is sung afar
wait
the farther and farther away childhood
to earth chewed with cinders in the lock of agrestic
voracious door with the adult iron laugh
jaws
I remember the mysterious haste which possessed you
after the passing of a train
massive chains moved blackly inside heads
cocks raised frugal crows between each pair of looks
and the winds wiped the all fresh barkings off the
moist muzzles
they went and burst far away where memory was no
they burst in a crash of light noiselessly
more
I remember a serene youth which was gathering from
the gleaming sights of the scattered burst
its stall
noiseless but crammed with flames
how I love them when they resurrect tears become
metallic
thou knowest—snowy adolescence—dost remember
the reversing dangers in the tears' black spray

TRISTAN TZARA

*amid the buoys of severed breasts
we wished to drink all the blood of the rocks purulent
with sunlight
at which the waves snapped with their hot jaws
the sea would bring scars still voluptuously warm
at each groan it would empty its rattle-filled bag of so
much pain
not knowing what to do next dost remember the noise
which embraced us
and our clinging to each other so that the flame's evil
omens grew pale
and the sun's sluice gave under the pressure of so
a grape's eye which has been burst much light
it was a day softer than a woman and it shook from
end to end*

*I have seen its body and I have lived on its light
its body writhed in all the rooms
offering up unsated gods to blind adolescences
and heaps of children turned into locusts on immense
fetlocks yelping with a savage joy [desolate beaches
branches babbling in the fragile rills
I saw its body stretched from end to end
and I plunged myself into its light which went from
room to room
the whipping tree lacing with thin weals of gloom
the immensely tortured body—it was a day softer
under the beds I saw than a woman
heavy masses of shadow
ready to fall on the sleeping felons
in the soft palms of their beds
I saw hanging from the haloes' ears
watching masses heavy and black-fisted
and stalking in the middle writing without respite
rain breaking grey wings and prisms
and brief phosphorescent wills lost amid laughter's
hatchings*

TRISTAN TZARA

Upon the vigils of nymphs who grope
it is henceforth snowing gently from the roof-timbers
of the night
snowing the colour of night—the runic watchman
let there be but ravines fustigated by the impetuous
blueness
the eye decked with gems is about to come down from
with a long trail of shrill whistles its girandole
one thought one was gliding into regions hard with
where floes littered with the strait's sighs [whiteness
revive the uneasy slit leading to other seas
which the sudden morning opened in the heart of the
the dog team taking wildly to the chase season
and crushing the snow-huts of the light hearts
with their pearly eyes at the bottom of crucibles
for having cooed too much in the drizzle
of joyous wrecks about slopes
where love struggles in a cage sweats in the hearth

TRISTAN TZARA

and cries and groans as a storm wears itself out in a
sailing-boats cast on dumb sands strait-jacket
an echoless cough knocking at the door
the void in which the raucous blue yawns
blow the water's guttural depths—
far away and so maternal is the reproach which broods
over the silence in the glowworm—
still and luminous with so much tension
to remain standing storm to starboard
anger has overcome turbulent space
and delirium is scourging the milk ghosts
nothing is left but puppets which drag along as the
aims direct
the bloodstained rocking-cradle of naval dyings
the disappointing experiences
harassed and shameless emanations from hyenas'
oblong cries
mingled with the frantic infiltrations of brainy
miasmas
and with the roaring hopes eager to get loose
it was a rugged morning bark-like and like an empty
in its cruelty carapace
and so young were the words that their meaning slid
off one's skin
and the harshness all about did not overwhelm the
with the dark weight of remorse [sonorous leafage
which the misunderstood blood was ruminating in the
immense devastation of the sea

then I drew back under the porches damaged in the
silence
the moon withered within me—and I became the
whole night
with its flashy rock talons ready to tear the human
silence

TRISTAN TZARA

*the deaf roads were losing their wings
and the man was extending under the wing of silence
an approximative man like me like thee and like other
silences*

(1928)

The low sadness of a desolate landscape. The low sadness of a few dwellers in blackness. The bristling noise which is small and repeated. Who shall say what throbbing is concealed in a call intentionally distant and sustained ? It wanders insensitive.

It is still light and night is not yet to be understood. Let there be a knock at the door and the door does not open. But who could have the singular notion of knocking at this country left to horror, the horror having a breath of the sea ? All open and clearcut. Dry is the plaint bestowed on dead padlocks. Rock and sand of bourdons. Hard as the incredible hammering and no questions underneath. The wind too has forsaken it, the till is empty, but the walls still threaten to collapse, no window has seen the unacknowledged woman at the gate, eager with impossible obstinacy, and uttering her confused and barred call behind an eagle dumb with terror, has seen the woman in love with nothing more beautiful than all flesh and gesture, afflicted with the most fabulous disease throughout the world, fixing her gaze on a wilderness peopled with gentle beings whose throats have been slit, and in each dead being her weeping hands ready to melt to sweetness, that paradise for trappers of emptiness and the impossible, all-powerful mistress of the prohibition against living

TRISTAN TZARA

elsewhere than in the iron grottoes and of the sweetness of living without movement, each in his lucifugous person and each person sheltered by the earth, in fresh blood, in the centre of the wilderness peopled with tender beings bound to the blood of those with the slit throats through a secret slumbering in its own depths, as the woman one's first love in an ever present oblivion.

Indescribable coolness. Eyes keener from youthfulness to youthfulness. I also have had wings for caressing in a limpid language which barely touched me. It was a prison made of lengthy childhoods, the torture of the too radiant summer days. And their twisted laughs, dressed in black, as was the only kindness vouchsafed to me in all my numerous questing years, to twist necks in their milk, the at last motionless fugitives with their salt legs, their eyes of definite breaks in the venerable sadness of that play of sparks. When they go out in blood stifled with a shooting cry like a star's. As nobody has lived.

(*The Antihead*, 1931)

REMINDER

*I have opened my eyes on loves without limit
and the new shadow on the new land
a silence trod on our bodies it was only the flash of
and the eye closed fright a day*

*sweet absence of words tangling the shadow
the calls became plaintive so far away still was the
and you soft spring-like flesh spring
lost bitter*

TRISTAN TZARA

*will you no longer bear my leisure my woes
shadows of frail ash in that grass which avoids you
I have rattled the dream and drummed without respite
under alien vaults
thy steps have come after me until late in the soul*

*a confusion of croakings happened to be on my way
I have rejected the depressing friendship of distant
calls
I no longer cloud my eyes with the sight of loves
without limit
lost without limit and turned to dumb friendships*
(The Travellers' Tree, 1930)

THE FORBIDDEN FIRE (IX)

*night was lighting night
night in its wolf-traps
the waves beg from the birds
and the water goes out*

*thereupon there was silence
engulfing towns away from the dead
like a silence watching over lamps
gnaws the moths of light
with no sadness no silence but the light
and no long bed of women's tresses*

*the eyes wander already the suckling's cry
neither joy nor woe—the rocked waters
the bears themselves have a pain in the earth
and I am still there and I have never moved
from our game-filled leisure*

(The Travellers' Tree, 1930)

PAUL ELUARD

POETRY'S EVIDENCE

I

Nothing is more effortless than falling asleep. But once we are sleeping there begins a mental activity so great that the body, for all its real physical inertia, may be found on waking utterly exhausted.

The practice of automatic writing takes place in the opposite way. For the mind to become completely detached a considerable effort is required, but however lengthy the production which thereupon follows, it does not and should not involve any effort or fatigue.

If dreams often interfere with the sleeper's rest, the mind's dictation, *occurring apart from all control by the intellect, and free of either aesthetic or moral preoccupation*, confers fresh strength upon him who lends himself to it.

■

The sleeper's feelings invariably tend to harmonize more or less easily or strenuously with the real world of his dreams. Hence the belief that reason is joining in behind the curtain of memory. The sleeping dreamer is almost never surprised by the contradictions among which his mind moves naturally. Once,

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however, he is back in ordinary life, it is only with difficulty that he realizes how, for example, he has been loving or hating things or persons to which he now feels indifferent. If he does not shrink from *self-knowledge*, if he analyses his dreams, he will find reasons for hoping or fearing. On the other hand, it is hope or fear which in the waking dreamer—the poet—shapes the imaginative activity. Let the poet express this hope or fear, and his relations to the world immediately change. For him, everything is an object for sensation, and, consequently, for feeling. Then all concrete things are his imagination's natural food, and, become motor, hope and fear pass, with his sensations and feelings, into the concrete.

*

Hallucination, innocence, rage, memory (that insane Proteus), old tales, unexpected recollections, conflagrations of ideas, feelings and things; systematic undertakings for idle ends, and idle ends which turn into immediately useful ends, the disorder of logic to absurdity, the use of the absurd to the point of sense—all that, and not a more or less felicitous assembling of vowels and consonants, of syllables and words, is what produces harmony in a poem. It is a matter of uttering a musical thought. And such music has no use for the drums and fiddles, the rhythms and rhymes employed in concerts for asses' ears.

I have known a woman singer who squinted and a dumb woman whose eyes said "I love you" in every known tongue, not to mention the tongues she had invented.

*

Bread is more useful than poetry. But love, in the full, human sense of the word, is not more useful

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than poetry. Since man puts himself at the top of the scale of living things, he cannot deny value to his feelings, however non-productive and anti-social they may be. "Man," says Feuerbach, "has the same senses as animals have, but in man sensation is not relative and subordinated to life's lower needs; it is an absolute being, its own end, and its own enjoyment." This brings us back to necessity. Man has constantly to be aware of his supremacy over nature in order to guard himself against, and subdue, it.

*

Elsewhere Feuerbach says: "Belief in a future life is an altogether unpoetic belief. Poetry springs out of pain.... Belief in a future life makes of all pain a lie, and hence it cannot be the source of real inspiration."

*

In adolescence man longs for childhood, in maturity for youth; in old age he feels the bitterness of having lived. The poet's images grow out of something to be forgotten and something to be remembered. He wearily projects his prophecies into the past. Everything he makes vanishes with the man he was yesterday. To-morrow there will be novelties. But there is no to-day in his universal present.

*

Caprice, contradiction, violence—they are poetry; in other words, poetry is a perpetual struggle, life's very principle, the queen of unrest.

*

Imagination lacks the imitative instinct. It is the spring and the torrent no vessel ever goes up. Out of and back into this living sleep, day is ever arising

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and dying. It is the universe without association, the universe which is not part of a greater universe, the godless universe, since it never lies, since it never confuses "witty women with time's remembrance and the amusements of savages."*

*

Truth, the whole truth, is the wandering castle of the imagination. Truth gets told very quickly, unreflectingly, steadily; and sadness, rage, gravity and joy are, for truth, but changes in time and skies which have been won.

*

Above everything—yes, I know, there have always been some to talk such twaddle, but as they were not there they have not been able to tell us that it was raining there, that it was dark and shivery, and that one was still aware there of man and his deplorable appearance, that one was still and must go on being still aware there of vile stupidity, and still hear muddy laughter and dead man's chatter. Above everything, "O, you, who are my brothers because I have enemies,"† and it is there alone that wretchedness undoes and sets up again incessantly a world, drab, common, unbearable and impossible.

*

Mind can only triumph in its most perilous activities. No daring is fatal.

Order is prudence : the preservation of food; and man is stupidly dying of hunger beside spoiled treasures.

* Benjamin Péret, *The Great Game*.

† Benjamin Péret, *The Animals of the Family*.

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Every man who pauses loses caste. Every satisfied man is a beast. The most common specimen is the warrior resting on his laurels.

Size does not exist for whoever wishes to grow. He has no model who seeks what he has never seen.

We shall annihilate the masters with their servants. Men will be equal.

Our brothers are setting themselves free. We are all on the same level. Let us blot out the others.

*

Jacques Vaché, while with the colours, wrote to André Breton on November 14, 1918: "How, my poor friend, am I going to stand this final period in uniform? (I have been assured that the war was over.) I am absolutely up against it... and then THEY are suspicious... THEY smell a rat. So long as they do not draw out my brains while THEY have me in their power? **

Two months later he killed himself.

*

Sade's twenty-seven years in prison, Hölderlin's madness, and Nerval's and Baudelaire's, Rimbaud's return to nothingness, Lautréamont's loneliness and death, Nouveau's poverty, Jarry's despair. Nothing that they made has perished. The evil principle which they represented in opposition to bourgeois good, the insurance-of-property good, is certain to win.

*

Employing contradictions purely with an equalizing purpose, and sorry to please provided it is self-satisfied, poetry has always *applied itself*, in spite of

* Jacques Vaché, *War Letters*.

all kinds of persecutions, to refusing to work for an order not its own, for unwanted fame, and the various advantages given to obedience and weakness.

*

Pure poetry ? Poetry's absolute power will purify men, all men. "Poetry must be made by all. Not by one" (Lautréamont). All the ivory towers will be pulled down, all speech will be holy, and, having at last overthrown reality, man will only have to shut his eyes to see opening the gates of Faerie.

II

"Your tongue, that goldfish in the bowl of your voice."

The beauty of this image of Apollinaire's results from its apparent accuracy. It falsely flatters in us our sense of the familiar. It is the same with :

"Brook, the silver in the dell's canteen,"

of Saint-Pol Roux's. As in the case of the hardy metaphors, "marble breasts" and "coral lips," we accept their evidence. A few simple relations lead us to overlook the strange terms of comparison. We understand "hard as marble" and "red as coral" without objecting that marble and coral are cold. We are dazzled, and so take as an absolute truth a wholly relative resemblance.

To the mobility of the tongue and the fish, Apollinaire adds their colour. The brook is table silver because we have often said or heard, "the silvery brook"—a commonplace. And thanks to these identities of form, colour and relation, new images are accepted although made up in a more arbitrary because purely formal manner—"the bowl of your voice" and "the dell's canteen." For, primarily,

each image is nothing but a comparison—"that gold-fish in the bowl" for "your voice's tongue" and "the silver in the canteen" for "the dell's brook." And yet what delights us is "the bowl of your voice" and "the dell's canteen"—what is unfathomable, what is true.

If I go to the extreme of giving such an elementary explanation of these two admirable images, it is in order to insist more strongly than ever on the supreme attraction I feel for unfathomable images, of the altogether novel relations of which the poetry called surrealist gives us a glimpse. Here are some among the many images which obsess me, lightning images which disturb and comfort me, and make me feel that nothing is incomprehensible and that for the mind nothing is lost :

"... *Beautiful like the chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella*" (Lautréamont).

"*The champagne's ruby*" (Lautréamont).

"*Old ocean, O noble celibate*" (Lautréamont).

"*I have seen a fig eat an onager*" (Lautréamont).

"*Doubt's duck with the vermouth lips*" (Lautréamont).

"*I am the saint at prayer on the terrace, as the cattle graze as far as the Sea of Palestine*" (Rimbaud).

"*The vigil's sea, like Amelia's breasts*" (Rimbaud).

"*Find flowers that are chairs*" (Rimbaud).

"*The genius, 'I am the Stilton !
It'll be our death . . . ?'*" (Rimbaud).

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“ *His heart, amber and spunsk* ” (Rimbaud).

“ *In eating the sound of moths* ” (Jarry).

“ *Near a gentleman swallowing himself* ” (Apollinaire).

“ *A charming mantelpiece holding its bitch on a lead* ” (Apollinaire).

“ *I shall laugh like a waterfall and like a blaze* ” (Tzara).

“ *In the stunted clay of mimes* ” (Tzara).

“ *The lock of hair digs a tunnel under Paris* ” (Breton).

“ *Night’s pedals move uninterruptedly* ” (Breton).

“ *On the hill only inspired by the painted lips* ” (Péret).

“ *The earth was shaped like a horseshoe* ” (Péret).

“ *The lazy suns which fed on meningitis* ” (Char).

“ *The lonely poet
Great wheelbarrow of the swamps* ” (Char).

“ *The numerous species of animals on heat upon the backs of which were painted famous lakes and other kinds of twilight* ” (Dali).

“ *To sail ship is the bird of the latitudes* ” (Unik).

Images are, images live, and everything becomes image. They were long mistaken for illusions because they were restricted, were made to undergo the test of reality, an insensitive and dead reality, when reality should have been made to undergo the test of its own interdependence which makes it alive, active, and perpetually moving.

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“Nothing is incomprehensible.”* Everything can be compared to everything, everything has its echo, its reason, its resemblance, its opposition and its becoming, everywhere. And this becoming is infinite.

*

It was between 1866 and 1875 that poets dared to bring together what had seemed to be permanently apart. Lautréamont did this more deliberately than any one else. A wonderful medium, he realized that here was a true intellectual phenomenon (“At the moment I write, new thrills are shaking the intellectual atmosphere : it is only necessary to have the courage to look them in the face”†). He was unaware of Rimbaud and Rimbaud was unaware of him, and yet it was the same voice which made them write down :

“*My hunger is the black air’s bits*” (Rimbaud).

“... *In the air beautiful and black*” (Lautréamont).

That was the time when, before unfortunately sinking to the most sinister of formal preoccupations, Mallarmé was writing *Igitur*, the last moonless night of a phantom; the time when Lewis Carroll went hunting the Snark “with a railway-share,” “with smiles and soap,” with the authentic poetic sense which, being a humorist, he nicknamed nonsense.

At last the poetic intelligence was seeing its frontiers destroyed and was restoring unity to the world.

*

Reduced to the level of scribblers, painters were copying apples and displaying virtuosity. Surrealist

* Lautréamont, *Poems*.

† Lautréamont, *The Songs of Maldoror*.

painters have copied an elephant which had an apple where its head should have been, an elephant of which the shadow was an umbrella. They copied it scrupulously, their eyes wide open, studying the least oddities of this apple pierced, like a heart, by an arrow.

They have scrupulously traced the irrational shapes beside which there could no longer be the mediocrity of a landscape or portrait it was beyond the capillary powers of comprehension of so many mediocre painters to embellish. They have made objective, they will go on making objective, what it has not been and is not yet possible to make objective—everything.

*

*“One no longer sits at the tables
Of the blessed, for one is dead”* (Charles Cros).

Only the living sit at tables. Blessed are the living, say the dead. And wretched the dead. And dead the wretched. Why refuse to sit at the tables of the blessed ? Because one is dead. Better to admit one is dead than wretched. It is thus possible to get the better of the blessed, of the living. In any case, death in the context of the poem is only moral death, deadness to the world.

When applied to such a statement of sentiment, how logic becomes precarious and ridiculous !

But ask a pure logician to expound these two lines of verse and you will find that he too is unable to reproduce their tone, which is so unexpected and thereby so deeply moving. . . .

*

In opposition to Balzac, who claimed to be the loser by the sexual act (“ It costs me,” he was in the habit of saying, “ a page of my work each time ”), I have always felt fitter, more fluent, more inventive, and especially surer of myself, after making love.

LUIS BUÑUEL & SALVADOR DALI

AN ANDALUSIAN DOG (Scenario)

PROLOGUE ONCE UPON A TIME...

A balcony was in the dark.

Indoors, a man is whetting his razor. He looks up through the window at the sky and sees...

A fleecy cloud drawing near to the full moon.

Then a young girl's head with staring eyes. A razor-blade approaches one of the eyes.

Now the fleecy cloud passes over the moon.

And the razor-blade passes through the girl's eye, slicing it in two.

End of Prologue.

EIGHT YEARS LATER

A deserted street. It is raining.

A man in a dark-grey suit appears on a bicycle. Over his head, back and loins he wears white linen shields. An oblong box with black and white diagonal stripes is strapped to his chest. He pedals mechanically, his hands not being on the handle-bars, but on his knees.

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C. U. of the cyclist's back, down to his thighs, with a longitudinal over-impression of the street through which he is cycling away from the camera.

Next the man is seen approaching the camera until there is a B.C.U. of the striped box.

An ordinary room on a third floor of the same street. In the centre a seated girl is absorbed in a book. Her dress is bright-coloured. Suddenly she shudders, listens wonderingly, and throws the book on to a divan beside her. It stays open. On one page is a reproduction of Vermeer's *The Lace Maker*. The girl is now sure that something is happening; she rises, turns about and hastens to the window.

Below in the street the cyclist had just stopped. Unconcernedly he allows himself and his bicycle to tumble into the gutter in the middle of a mud-heap.

With an angry and spiteful gesture, the girl rushes to the stairs to get down to the street.

B.C.U. of the cyclist on the ground in the very position of his fall. His face is expressionless.

The girl comes out of the house and, throwing herself frantically upon the cyclist, kisses him on the mouth, eyes and nose. The rain increases to such a flood as to wipe out the scene.

Dissolving into the box, the oblique stripes of which superimpose themselves on the teeming rain. With a small key, hands open the box and draw out a necktie wrapped in tissue paper. The rain, the box, the tissue paper and the tie must all appear obliquely striped, the widths of the stripes alone varying.

The same room.

The girl stands by the bed looking at the articles worn by the cyclist—the shields, the box, the stiff collar and the dark plain tie—all laid out on the bed as if they had been put down by some one lying on it. The girl finally decides to pick up the collar

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and remove the tie from it. She replaces this tie with a striped tie she has taken from the box. She puts it down in the same place and then seats herself near the bed in the attitude of watching a dead body.

(Note—The bed, that is to say, the bedspread and the pillows, are slightly crumpled and depressed as if a human body were really lying there.)

The woman feels that some one is behind her and turns to see who. She is not at all surprised to find it is the cyclist, now without any of his former trappings, but looking very attentively at something in his right hand. His absorption betrays much anxiety.

The woman approaches and looks in turn at what is in his hand. B.C.U. of the hand, with in the middle of it ants swarming out of a black hole. None of the ants fall off the hand.

Dissolving into the armpit hair of a girl stretched on the sand of a sunny beach. *Dissolving* into a sea-urchin whose sharp spines wave slightly. *Dissolving* into the head of another girl shot vigorously *downward* and framed in a diaphragm. The diaphragm opens to show the girl surrounded by a group of people who are trying to break through a police-cordon.

In the centre of the group the girl is trying with a stick to pick up a severed hand with painted fingernails, which is lying on the ground. A policeman comes up and scolds her vehemently. He bends down, picks up the hand, wraps it up carefully and puts it in the box the cyclist had carried. He hands this to the girl and gives her a military salute when she thanks him.

She must, at the very moment the policeman gives her the box, register an extraordinary emotion which completely distracts her. She is as if entranced by echoes of some far-off church music; perhaps it is music she has heard in earliest childhood.

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Their curiosity satisfied, the bystanders scatter in all directions.

The scene was being watched by the persons already seen in the third-floor room. They are visible through the window of a balcony overlooking the spot. As the policeman hands the box to the girl, the two people on the balcony appear overcome to the point of tears by the same emotion as she. Their heads nod to and fro as if beating time to the phantom music.

The cyclist looks at the girl as if to say, "Did you see? Hadn't I told you so?"

Again he looks down to the street where the girl, now alone, is as if rooted to the spot in a state of utter inhibition. Motor-cars flash by at breakneck speed. Suddenly she is run over by one and horribly mutilated.

Thereupon, with the firmness of one doing what he is fully entitled to do, the cyclist comes up to the girl and, having gazed lasciviously straight into her eyes, puts his hands on her jumper over her breasts. B.C.U. of the eager hands touching the breasts. These themselves appear through the jumper. Thereupon, the cyclist's face is seen to take on a look of terrible, almost mortal, anguish, and blood dribbles from his mouth on to the girl's bared breast.

Her breasts dissolve into thighs, the while the cyclist goes on caressing. His expression has changed: his eyes gleam with malice and lust; his mouth, from being wide open, gradually closes until it is very small and as if made tight by a sphincter.

The girl steps back to the middle of the room, the cyclist following her and still in the same attitude.

Suddenly she makes a vigorous movement that shakes off his arms and frees her from his amorous attack.

LUIS BUÑUEL & SALVADOR DALÍ

The cyclist's mouth twists in anger.

She realizes that a disagreeable, perhaps violent, scene is threatening. Step by step, she reaches a corner of the room and puts a small table between them.

The cyclist gesticulates like a melodrama villain. He looks hither and thither for something or other. At his feet he sees a length of rope and picks it up with his right hand. With his left he gropes on the floor and picks up another, similar length of rope.

Glued to the wall, the terrified girl watches his actions.

He comes up to her, painfully dragging along whatever is attached to the pieces of rope.

Thereupon, the following pass across the screen: first, a cork, then a melon, then two teachers from a church school, and finally two magnificent grand pianos. The pianos are filled with the carcasses of donkeys, their legs, tails, hind-quarters and excrement sticking out of the piano-cases. As one piano passes across the screen, a huge donkey's head is seen resting on its keyboard.

The cyclist, as he so painfully drags this load forward, strains desperately to reach the girl. He overturns chairs and tables, a pedestal lamp, and so on. The donkeys' hind-quarters catch in one thing after another. The lamp hanging from the ceiling is grazed by a bare bone and goes on swinging until the end of the scene.

As the cyclist is about to reach the girl, she slips away and escapes. He drops the ropes and pursues her. She opens a door and vanishes into the next room, though not quickly enough to be able to lock herself in. The cyclist has succeeded in getting his forearm between the door she is trying to shut and the jamb, and the door, squeezing it at the wrist, holds the forearm captive.

LUIS BUNUEL & SALVADOR DALI

Inside the room, the girl goes on trying to press the door shut and sees the hand in *slow motion* clutching with pain, the ants reappearing and swarming over the door.

Forthwith, she turns her head to see the middle of this room, which is the twin of the other, though made to look different by the lighting. She sees . . .

The bed with the cyclist lying on it, even as his hand is still caught in the door. He is wearing the shields and the striped box is on his chest. He is motionless and in his wide-open eyes is a superstitious expression, as if to say, "Now something really extraordinary is going to happen!"

ABOUT THREE IN THE MORNING

On the landing, outside the front door of the flat, stands a new character, seen from behind. He rings the bell of the flat where the events are taking place. The parts of the electric bell are not shown, but through two holes over the door there are seen instead two hands shaking a silver cocktail-shaker. The action of these hands is instantaneous, as when in ordinary films a bell button is pressed.

The cyclist in bed gives a jump.

The girl opens the door.

The newcomer marches straight to the bed and peremptorily tells the cyclist to get up. He complies so recalcitrantly that the other finds he has to catch hold of him by the shields and lug him up by force.

Having torn off his shields one by one, he throws them out of the window. The striped box takes the same road, and so do the straps which the patient was trying to preserve from such a fate. The newcomer is angry and punishes the cyclist by making him go and stand with his face to the wall.

LUIS BUNUEL & SALVADOR DALI

All this time the newcomer has always been seen from behind. He now turns round for the first time in order to get something from the other side of the room.

Sub-title reading:

SIXTEEN YEARS AGO

At this point the photography grows hazy (soft focus). The newcomer moves at *slow motion* and his features are seen to be those of the cyclist; they *are* the same features, but the 'newcomer' looks younger and sadder, as no doubt the other looked years ago.

C.U. of the newcomer walking towards the back of the room and preceded by the camera on a trolley.

A desk which the newcomer is approaching comes on to the screen. On this desk are two books and other schoolroom appurtenances. Their position and moral intention are to be determined carefully.

The newcomer picks up the two books and goes back to the cyclist. At the same moment everything returns to normal, there being an end of *the soft focus and slow motion*.

Having come up to the cyclist, the newcomer orders him to fold his arms, places a book in each of his hands, and orders him to remain so, as a punishment.

The punished cyclist now assumes a cunning and treacherous expression. He turns round to the newcomer and the books he is still holding change into revolvers.

The newcomer looks at him fondly, his expression of fondness increasing ever and anon.

The cyclist threatens the other with his revolvers, compelling him to put up his hands. Then, although the newcomer has obeyed, he fires both revolvers at him. C.U. of the newcomer falling fatally wounded,

LUIS BUNUEL & SALVADOR DALI

his features twisting in agony. (The *soft focus* is resumed and the newcomer's fall is at even slower *slow motion* than the previous one.)

Long shot of the wounded man falling, no longer in the room, however, but in some grounds. Seated near him is a woman with bare shoulders, who, motionless and seen from behind, leans slightly forward. As he falls the wounded man tries to seize and to caress her shoulders; one shaking hand is turned inwards, the other just grazes the skin of the bare shoulders. At last he drops.

Long shot. Several passers-by and a number of park-keepers rush to his assistance. They take him up in their arms and bear him away through the woods.

Here the passionate cripple must be made to take a hand.

And the scene is once more in the same room. A door—the one which caught the hand—opens slowly. The girl we know already reappears. She shuts the door after her and looks very closely at the wall the murderer had been facing.

The man is no longer there. The wall is bare of ornament or picture. The girl registers annoyance and impatience.

Again the wall is seen with in the middle a small black spot.

C.U. of this small spot, which turns out to be a death's head moth.

B.C.U. of the moth.

The death's head on the moth's wings fills the screen.

M.S. of the cyclist surging abruptly into view. He puts his hand suddenly to his mouth, like a man about to lose his teeth.

The girl looks at him disdainfully.

LUIS BUNUEL & SALVADOR DALI

When the cyclist removes his hand, it is seen that his mouth has gone.

The girl seems to be saying to him, "All right! What next?" And she touches up her mouth with lip-stick.

The cyclist's head reappears. Hairs are beginning to sprout there where his mouth had been.

Seeing this, the girl smothers a cry and looks quickly at her armpit, which is thoroughly depilated. She sticks out her tongue at him scornfully, throws a shawl over her shoulders, opens the door, and passes into the adjoining room, which is a spacious beach.

Near the water a third character is waiting. He and the girl greet each other very affably and walk beside the sea.

Shot of their legs and of the waves breaking at their feet. The camera travels after them on a trolley. Lightly the waves throw up at their feet, first the straps, then the striped box, next the shields, and finally the bicycle. This shot goes on a little so that the sea may be seen not to wash ashore anything else.

They continue their walk along the beach, sinking little by little into the sand as these words appear in the sky:

AT SPRING TIME

All is changed.

Now we see a limitless desert. In the centre and sunk in the sand up to their breast-bones, the cyclist and the girl, are seen to have become blind and ragged and are being roasted by the sun and eaten by a swarm of insects.

(Rendered into English by Richard Thoma)

RENÉ CREVEL

EVERY ONE THINKS HIMSELF PHOENIX....

Every one thinks himself phoenix, begging for the wasps'-nest of his complexes to be burnt out, annihilated, in the hope that from their ashes may arise those secret hornets whose murmur seems to him the most beautiful, the true, the only music, the inner music.

Has not imagination herself been constrained to embroider, re-embroider and embroider yet again arabesques about ancient themes?

Thus she turns round and round, feeding on the most moth-eaten myths, she who, given freedom of activity, could regenerate at last this living that is, in fact and gesture, word and thought, the grotesque parody of what was.

In the last thirty years we have seen, in company with a host of kindred futilities, those satyriastic and nymphomaniacal inflations whose excesses, however exalted and exalting they may have appeared at first sight, only served to reveal a world's distress and stupidity.

The Church took advantage of this sordid and demented floundering, as she does of every other form of sin ordained by her, to extract therefrom a notion of damnation. She forgives flesh for being flesh only when it shivers. To the misery of rags she proposes the warmth of her stinking bosom.

And even for those whose rags are moral rags, the repentant Magdalens, male and female, once their strength is spent, confession (that unfailing source of middle-class ecstasy) and penitence constitute nothing more than a means of recalling a form of living that they have rejected or that has rejected them.

Besides, no matter how great the resistance of any given person in the face of religious inducement, no matter how final his adherence to a lay cynicism, once he observes in himself the results of a past that is his, that he has made his, he cannot fail to see himself as the point of intersection of every kind of injustice, hideousness and tomfoolery, and doomed to a systematic contempt, if not a total unawareness, of the straight lines, curves, zigzags, trajectories, ellipses and parabolae that constitute not merely the history of the world but the very script of that history.

The deforming mirror of egoism has created a belief in convergence, to be interpreted with absolute finality, by individual vanity.

It is remarkable that even the most dogmatic person will only accept the fact of his ugliness when he has, if not deified, at least flavoured that ugliness with some kind of aesthetic sauce (expressionism). From his own dull story he will not be slow to deduce the dulness of the world (scepticism). The chancellor of conflicts has recognized at once their pathetic letters of nobility. The obsessed is only prepared to take cognizance of his obsession that he may the better cultivate and cherish it.

The most audacious modes of procedure by introspection, even allowing them to be a very excellent and perfect source of information, should not represent anything more serious than a preliminary chapter of a science that is at once general and particular (ousting the old analytico-metaphysical

psychology) and whose function, without any demagogical pretensions to humaneness, humanism, humanities or humanity, is to clear away the contemplative pretexts on which individualism is so proudly established and reveal to man his place in the universe.

Given the present state of the world, the opposition between the personal and collective forms of life, the discovery, made by an acute observer, that the profound facts of the subconscious can be co-ordinated with the superficial disturbances of consciousness, can only be exploited as a means of developing new specimens of nightmare and neurosis.

In my own case, a simple dream enabled me to realize that this total clarity in which we are exhorted to wash and be clean is just as false as the chiaroscuro from which hasty specialists dared to claim that they could withdraw all shadow.

Here are the facts :

As a child, every effort has been made to turn me against animals. Two years ago friends who knew that I was alone and ill in a sanatorium sent me a rough-haired fox-terrier.

I naturalized him without delay, notwithstanding the fact that he was the complete canine equivalent of the young English ice-hockey champion, addicted to whisky and an enthusiast for the Russian Ballet : this in virtue of the native artlessness of his expression, his natural elegance, his taste for violent games, for the country, for the snows, his muscular limbs, his narrow loins, the optimism of his respiration, his passion for raw meat, his sensual greediness that was like a child's and not concerned with making any sexual distinctions in the rest of his kind, and finally the pale tobacco colour of his forty winks.

His topaz eyes, changing to emerald against the

light, cannot have enjoyed any great clearness of vision. He sniffed deeply in an endeavour to rectify this deficiency. It sometimes happened, however, that his fresh, damp, quivering truffle was applied to some inodorous matter. Thereupon he would give a jump, as though to clinch the revelation.

Thus, with the conscientiousness of a young, slightly aesthetic, extremely short-sighted Oxonian, who on the occasion of his visiting Italy for the first time would distinguish himself as an acrobat in order not to lose a crumb of the quattrocentisti, my dog would bound, rebound and bound again as he inspected my room in the closest detail.

I did my best to put an end to it by reminding him how curiosity had killed the cat. But not even his hatred of the feline race could dissuade him.

Because of the song :

*Hoist me, Marius,
Till I see the rocket going off,
Hoist me, Marius,
Till I see the rocket going off,*

he became Marius, then Skybaby.

I always interpreted my excellent relations with Marius-Skybaby as a revenge of the animal, of everything that my youth, rightly or wrongly, considered itself bereft of.

The erotic element is always present between dog and master.

He, naturally, liked to rub himself against my leg, and asked nothing better than to convince me of the virtuosity of his long pink tongue.

I myself was perfectly aware, when I transferred his background from England to Marseilles, of the possible interpretation of the song about the rocket.

And does not the nickname of Skybaby evoke the Neapolitan phallus, winged, like Mercury's hat?

It was some time after I had been presented with my horoscope which declared, as it happened, that domestic animals were not favourable to me, that Marius-Skybaby got lost and could not be found. So the friends who had given him to me sent me a poodle bitch.

The wool floating about her body and legs metamorphosed, by effect of contrast, her muzzle into a stork's beak and her paws into incredibly tiny Louis Quinze slippers.

Her gaze was not reduced, as in the case of Marius, to the flash of a precious stone. It was of liquid phosphor, a double lake of molten gold, a double well of lava and danger in the shadow of so fine a fleece that the least breath swept through its thickets and revealed, against the virginal skin that held its roots, a golden underwood that turned chestnut-coloured in the daylight and violet in the dusk.

From every point of view she was the opposite of Marius, contemptuous of solid lumps of beef and wild scampers; but compensation was provided by the inviolable mystery of her demeanour reminiscent of a vitriolic highly-corseted provincial whose drink was nightmare and melissa-water, whose food megrim, cream-crackers and above all a spontaneous and unsophisticated familiarity with the works of Fantomas.

She belonged to the days of needle umbrellas and buttoned boots but also to those of the alchemists. She would have been worthy of receiving the confidences of Theresa Humbert and Catherine of Medicis, and she would have made them a present of her ideas, simply because such was her pleasure and out of loathing for all floundering and chicken-hearted

decencies, decencies that she would have been entitled to despise, at the court of the Valois no less than under Loubet's septennate, on the strength—or the fragility—of her ridiculously delicate anatomy.

She required no sleep.

Though she was abolished, form and colour, by night, yet her eyes gleaming more like danger-signals than night-lamps, defied all the powers of darkness. I could not sleep with this sense of a sorceress close at hand keeping vigil.

Coincidence : her name was Marianne.

Mindful of Marius-Skybaby, I bore her animosity on the score of this name that seemed to me like an imposture, though it were not her choice.

Because of the sinister exterior of this bitch, and also because she had something in common with Chirico's hero, she became Madame Hebdomeros.

Now, Madame Hebdomeros, whether on account of this surname of not, only lasted a week.

She ran after a motor-car (I had held her by the collar while it passed), caught up with it, knocked her fragile stork's beak against one of the tyres and fell, not even scratched.

As long as I live I shall never be able to visualize death otherwise than as a heavy ball of wool growing cold, on a road, at the fall of evening. They came to life and to light in my dreams, the eyes of Madame Hebdomeros, they came to life only to be extinguished.

As she collapsed in a mass, at that very moment, another mass fell. It was my sex that came away, just as Madame Hebdomeros, in an ebbing of life and courage, had declined to be maintained any longer on her four dainty paws. Already she had read my most secret thoughts and judged them. She had

made up her mind that I was too selfish to co-habit, to co-exist with an animal, with the animal.

Was the conclusion to be drawn from this dream necessarily that of the psycho-analyst: that the childish dread of dogs was already an expression of the castration complex? or, on the contrary, had the systematic evocation for my pleasure of ancient bugbears given fresh strength to that obsession and attached it to me anew?

In which case, far from desiring to be revenged, it would seem that I had accepted, desired, organized first of all the loss of Marius, and then urged Madame Hebdomeros under the murderous wheels of a motor-car. Holding her back by the collar would only have been a way of play-acting the good master and exasperating, in so placid a creature, the desire to run to her death.

No problem of individual psychology posed in accordance with rules and formulae, no question reduced by psycho-analytical methods and isolated, can receive an approximate, much less a correct, solution.

In no case, moreover, can it be a mere question of personal anecdote, or rather, there is no personal anecdote that does not carry outside and beyond its own limits the creature about whom or in whom the moral or material facts of that anecdote have arisen.

It is no doubt true that certain interrogations, however egoistically crippled in scope, imply that the work of clearing away the rubbish has begun. But what result can the excavator hope to achieve if he has not previously put himself on his guard against his own garbage of pretexts and hypocrisies?

What is the use, even supposing it to be so, of having raised, thanks to the efforts and researches of a small group, what Breton calls the *terrible interdict*,

RENE CREVEL

if all the old prohibited areas are going to be split up into individual gardens of pleasure and displeasure, if, in a Pantheistic inertia, they are to be let lapse into waste land, or if scholastic skyscrapers are going to spring up all along their avenues as a guarantee of modernity ?

The partisans, swindlers or simpletons, of the old analytico-metaphysical method at any price are always ready to hail it as a miracle and a revelation when the clouds of mica that they themselves have been at such pains to heap up intercept the little light at our disposal, at yours and theirs, and bend it back upon us, upon you and them, in a mockery of dazzling rays.

Again, the petty sadism of the observers and the masochistic vanity of the observed take delight in every form of conjunctivitis, as though clear sightedness, if not exactly illumination, were a function of such virulence.

Christianity has never lost its medieval delight in scrofula. The evangelical paradoxes on the hungry and the poor in spirit still provide titles, epigraphs and themes for the books of our men of letters.

Surely the world confesses to its own flatness and imbecility by the very fact of explaining as a form of indigence the hypertrophy or morbidity that tends to create that which is neither flat nor imbecile.

(Diderot's Harpsichord)

(Rendered into English by Samuel Beckett)

BENJAMIN PÉRET

LARBOARD FOR ALL

*Larboard take out his blue brain
Larboard move off his left neighbour
Larboard give me some drinking water
Larboard mind the mountains
Larboard think of arsenic
Larboard change the ink—it is yellow
Larboard protect me from draughts
Larboard remember last year
Larboard remember the heat
Larboard remember the cactus walkers
for we pass
and the swallows pass with us
but we spit in the air
and the swallows spit on us*

TO SLEEP TO SLEEP IN THE STONES

*Sun worn track shuddering stones
A spear of storm strikes the frozen word
This is the day of whorling liquids
liquids with ears of suspicion*

BENJAMIN PERET

whose presence is hidden beneath the mystery of
But now the world ceases to be frozen [triangles
and the storm with peacock eyes slides under it
like a snake asleep with its tail in its ear
because all is black
the streets flabby as gloves
the railway stations with mirror-like gestures
the canals whose banks try vainly to salute the clouds
and the sand
the sand which is frozen like a pump
and throws out its crystal tentacles
Not all its tentacles will ever be able to change the
For the sky opens like an oyster [sky into hands
and hands can only close on the beams of the seas
which pollute the blue eyes of the sharks
scented travellers
travellers without a jolt
who perpetually contort the warning whistles of the
willows
the great spice willows which fall to the ground
like feathers

If some day the earth shall cease to be a willow
the great swamps of blood and glass will feel their
and crying Nettles Nettles [bellies swelling
Push nettles down the negro's throat
one-eyed as only negroes can be
and the negro will become a nettle
and his lost eye a cassock
while a long bar of copper will stretch up like a flame
so far so high that the nettles will no longer be its
but the fatal leaps of a mass of foam [children
saluted by the thousand hooks of the boiling waters

BENJAMIN PERET

which the white bread throws out
bread so white that beside it black is white
and that the bitter rocks slowly devour the ankles
of the mahogany dancers
but the nettles of mosaic the nettles will have asses'
and feet of snow ears to-morrow
and they will be so white that the whitest bread will
forget itself in their labyrinths
Its cries will re-echo in the thousand agate tunnels of
the morning
and the landscape will sing One Two Three Four
Two Three One Four
the crows have a church gleam
and drown themselves every evening in the sewers
of god

But be still heap of bread the landscape raises its great
feather arms
and the feathers fly away and cover the tail of the
hills
and now the bird of the hills finds itself again in the
water's cage

But stop feathers for the landscape is almost nothing
which you draw but a blackball
So it is you daughter with breasts of sunlight who will
the hypnotic landscape be the landscape
the dramatic landscape
the dreadful landscape
the glacial landscape
the absurd white landscape

BENJAMIN PERET

which runs off like a beaten dog
to hide itself in the pillar-boxes of large towns
under the hats of the winds
under the oranges of mists
under the bruised lights
under the hesitant and sounding steps of madmen
under the brilliant rails of women
which follow from afar the will o' the wisps of the
great herons of day and night
the great herons with eternal cruel lips of salt
eternal and white
cruel and white

MY HAND IN THE COFFIN

*The hanged man is a pirate
who had teeth
who had bones
who had bones
with water in them*

BENJAMIN PERET

*Then he went off like a snake
his jaw loosened.
his tongue reached up over his eye
After that the grasshoppers and the onions
the bananas and the necklaces
fell out of his pocket one by one
What luck what luck they said
his mouth is the sister of my mouth
and it's fine walking in She-Ass Street*

MYSTERY OF MY BIRTH

*And when I replied to him 19
he replied to me 19
22 if you have time to be rich
30 and 40 for the comedy in two movements
50 for your dirty birthday
100 for the conveniences of spring
For the rest I am pale and hypnotic
but attend to your paving-stones dear doctor
and give the clean water time to become dirty*

THE SPILT BLOOD

*The ash which is the cigar's sickness
imitates the caretaker going downstairs
when his broom fallen from the fourth floor has
killed the gasman
the gasman like a grub in the salad.
The bird lies in wait for the grub and the broom has
killed you gasman*

BENJAMIN PERET

*Your wife will have hair white as sugar
and her ears will be unpaid bills
unpaid because you are dead
But why didn't the gasman have feet like a figure 3
why didn't he have the frank look of a glove-shop
why didn't he have the withered breast of his mother
dangling on his stomach
why didn't he have flies in his coat pockets*

*he would have passed damp and cold like a chipped
vase
and his hands would have fondled the bolts of his
prison
But the sun in his pocket had put on its cap*

BENJAMIN PERET

I SHALL GO SHALL I

*There was a fine house
on which bathed a fire-fighter*

*There was a fine house
hung with caps and gilded helmets*

*There was a fine house
full of glass and blood*

*There was a fine house
standing in a swamp*

*There was a fine house
whose master was of straw
whose master was a beech
whose master was a letter
whose master was a hair
whose master was a sigh
whose master was a heaving to
whose master was a vampire
whose master was short commons
whose master was a kick
whose master was a cavernous voice
whose master was a whirlwind
whose master was a capsized ship*

BENJAMIN PERET

*whose master was a bum
whose master was the Red Flag
whose master was death by violence*

Tell me tell me where is the fine house

(Rendered into English by J. Bronowski)

RENÉ CHAR

ARTINE

Most of these stars faded away after a few minutes, but there was one which scintillated on his breast, sinking deeper, ever deeper, into it, and Bella could not look away from it.

ACHIM D'ARNIM, *Isabella of Egypt.*

To the silence of her who leaves one dreamy.

*

In the bed they had made up for me were : a bruised and bleeding animal the size of a bun, a lead pipe, a gust of wind, an icy shell, a used cartridge, two fingers of a glove, an oil spot; there was no prison door, there was the taste of bitterness, a glass-cutter's diamond, a hair, a day, a broken chair, a silk-worm, stolen goods, the chain of an overcoat, a tame green-fly, a branch of coral, a shoemaker's nail, an omnibus wheel.

*

The astonishing vegetation of major dreams hardly dissimulates among its branches the large black signs which attempt to reveal the inaccessible truths to us at various hours of our existence. The letters disappear one by one at the approach of breath. Is that a shambles ?

*

RENE CHAR

The offer of a glass of water as he passes to a horseman hurtling at full speed over a racecourse which has been invaded by the mob presupposes complete lack of skill on both sides : Artine brought that monumental aridity to the spirits she visited.

*

Impatient, he was perfectly aware of the order of the dreams which would henceforth haunt his brain, particularly in the domain of love, the devouring activity of which readily appeared apart from his sexual moments; assimilation developing itself, the black night in the carefully shut hot-houses.

*

Artine crosses the name of a town without difficulty. It is silence that detaches sleep.

*

The objects described and assembled under the name of exact-nature are part of the setting in which occur the erotic acts of inevitable sequences, a daily and nocturnal epic. The hot imaginary worlds that move ceaselessly in the country at harvest time render his eye aggressive and make solitude intolerable to him possessing the power of destruction. In the case of extraordinary disorders, however, it is better to trust altogether to them.

*

The lethargic state which preceded Artine added the elements indispensable to the projection of

RENE CHAR

striking impressions on the screen of floating ruins : flaming eiderdown precipitated into the bottomless pit of obscurity in perpetual motion.

*

Despite animals and cyclones, Artine retained an inexhaustible freshness. During the walk, it was absolute transparency.

*

The machinery of Artine's beauty may rise up out of the most active depression, the curious mind nevertheless remains a furious mind, the indifferent mind an extremely curious mind.

*

Artine's appearances went beyond the limits of those sleep-worlds where the *for* and the *for* are animated by an equal murderous violence. They occurred in the folds of a burning silk peopled with trees of which the leaves were ash.

*

When it was a question of welcoming the multitude of Artine's mortal enemies during an interminable evening, the horse-carriage, washed and renovated, almost always won as against the room papered with saltpetre. The dead-wood face * was especially hateful. The breathless race of two lovers at random along the highways suddenly became enough distraction to allow the dream to unfold thereupon, under the open sky.

*

* Jesus Christ.

RENE CHAR

Sometimes, a careless movement caused a head that was not mine to fall on Artine's throat. Then, the enormous mass of sulphur consumed itself slowly, without smoke, presence in itself and vibrating stillness.

*

The book open on Artine's knees could only be read on gloomy days. At irregular intervals the heroes would come to learn what calamities were about to burst upon them again, and in what numerous and terrifying directions their irreproachable fates would again travel. Solely occupied with Destiny, they were, for the most part, of pleasant physique. They moved about slowly and were not very loquacious. They expressed their desires with large, unforeseeable movements of the head. Furthermore, they seemed to be utter strangers to one another.

*

The poet has slain his model.

(1930)

THE POETIC SPIRIT

Man walks. So do trees. Do not forget to place your shoes at the foot of the tree before waking up. A disagreeable impression.

*

The statutes of eroticism.

*

RENE CHAR

I do not jest with swine.

*

The wandering dog does not necessarily reach the forest.

*

From to-day onwards, there are only the sky, Hades and I. To-morrow, water will make the fire sing in the kettles. And there will be fools to say the world is upside down.

*

The statutes of eroticism.

*

At the end of the river's arm is the hand of sand which writes down everything happening on the river.

*

If one must distinguish several qualities in maternal love, it is necessary to establish a hierarchy of putrefaction.

*

The statutes of eroticism.

*

Teach me to kill and I shall teach you to enjoy.

*

RENE CHAR

My friend the pruner writes to me: "... For my part, I have begun to think that night still waits for me."

*

In love there is also stillness, that gigantic sex which unsews itself, which rises up and breathes me in, the year of my birth remaining of course the year of my death.

*

The statutes of eroticism.

*

The long silent walks in twos at night through the deserted countryside, in company with the somnambulist panther, the masons' terror.

*

Dear Artine,—I have the impression that your major dreams no longer as heretofore affect me throughout the whole of my sensitive flesh. Our first meeting is as far away as October, 1929. Since then I have not been favoured by the racecourses. I know what is to blame—it is the gas which does not shed enough light on the horses of small proportions as they pass the winning-post and thereby determines incredible collisions with remarkable losses of blood. Eden of slaughter! The way my clothes wear out, the enervating comings and goings of green lizards on the grass, the presence here and there of unmistakable tumours—all in proximity to Beauty—place me, as concerns you, in a very cruel plight. Do you

RENE CHAR

think a row of poplars is enough to indicate your sleeping-place to the migratory birds which are forever complaining that they lose sight of you in space ? I do not believe it.

I move in a landscape where Revolution and Love have concerted to light up astonishing prospects and to make overwhelming speeches. At the right moment, a wasp-waisted girl appears, cuts the throat of a cock, and drops into her lethargic sleep; meanwhile a few feet from her bed there flows a whole river with its dangers.

It has pleased you in a number of circumstances to recognize my loyalty. I like to think that you have not been altogether indifferent to this desperate *daring*. In that hope, dear Artine, &c. . . .

(1931)

(Rendered into English by Richard Thoma)

RENÉ CREVEL

THE PERIOD OF SLEEPING-FITS

Know that poetry is found there wherever the stupidly jeering smile of the duck-faced man is not.

LAUTRÉAMONT.

So many voices that were calculated even when the speakers smiled had disgusted my ears with hearing. Over the too quotidian cobbles, my feet were dragging weighted miles lined with a shadow which yet had no thickness. All the trees were in gallow's wood, and they were innumerable in the forest of repression, with its leaden foliage so thick that from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn one did not dare to imagine that some day, beyond the horizon and beyond habit, there would burst a sun all sulphur and love. The leaves were repeating the druidical ineptitudes of oaks, the Mediterranean hypocrisy of olive trees, the fatal bitterness of box, the icy Puritanism of willows, and the dirty innuendos whispered by the poplars of the Third Republic. All the tree-trunks were divided into an infinity of branches sinuous and insinuating, which proffered their muffling ability to strangle quickly, if not the too reckless creatures, certainly the words in their throats. Shipwrecks right inland. Old men were nodding their heads, assured that none would dare to retort to their cloying smiles

by refusing to clutch at the wrecks of dogmas, the buoys of classical education, or the floating roots of prejudices.

Now, the period of sleeping-fits remains for me as above all the refusal of an obstinate heart, obstinate in beating, even in the void of a breast which all the ants of dissatisfaction had begun to attack and to eat away to the point of its caving-in.

Yes, I had passed my fifteenth birthday, my twentieth birthday. That was natural, and it was natural too that my forehead on fire should have yearned for its wreath of cool hands.

Before, as during, as after, the War, the atmosphere of France had unremittingly been that with which sceptical heads and empty heads are made.

In the days of my childhood, immediately after the first secret readings of books, unmistakable realism had sought to constrain me to see the world as all puffiness and sclerosis. In practice, a sordid materialism expressed official idealism. When I was taking philosophy at the *lycée*, Kant appeared to me, in the icy halo of his intangible noumena, as an avenger, and all the more and all the better did he so appear, that the war-like opportunism of the time was unceasingly seeking reasons for having no reasons. A few years later it was Chirico's pictures which, through the casements made by their frames, opened up a whole series of avenues to my dreams. In the heart of the metaphysical city, in the shadows of statues, artichoke pillows invited to sleep, while, as I read Lautréamont, Paris ceased to be the capital of France and rose again to life out of its stones. The Seine . . . the Rue Vivienne. . . . The light in the Ile de France, which commonplace people find so agreeable, was to me no longer even a scrap of paper. The lead of the skies, the lead of skulls, was lit, crowned, torn, illu-

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minated by a revealing thunderbolt. And even now, after years and years, to enable me to touch that ever fiery time, there must be the May storm so quickening the pulse as to make one fancy that, born of the wrists, subterranean rows of little birds are blooming in heavy flowers of grey matter under the mounds of one's palms.

I wish I could write these recollections in letters of phosphorus. If I am writing them at all, it is because just now, in the Avenue de l'Opéra, the sunset had suffused the faces with enough sulphur to turn them yellow, an unbearable yellow, while at the same instant there became blue, an intolerable blue, the bowler hat, originally black, of a quaint little stroller.

Thus I am able to recall that Desnos has eyes sticking out of his face. I am able to recall his two oysters in their shell-lids as they used to reflect in all their glaucous and raucous passivity the motion of the sea. At the edge, the start, of this sea, there had been a beach, of sand by day and of skin by night. On the land side of the beach, in an orchard with too many flowers, a girl had thrown herself down and asked me to give a whole afternoon to crushing geraniums between her breasts.

In the evening, she had invited me to her mother's, her mother being chock-full of theosophy and occult sciences. In the dining-room of the little house, there was also an old woman who, because she could scratch her nose with her chin, had herself called Madame Dante. In between a couple of vaticinations, this self-styled descendant of the famous Alighieri would in winter collect ivy in the Parc Monceau with which to deck her head-bands. In summer, she made herself a scourge on the Normandy coast.

The girl with the geranium breasts, her mother, Madame Dante, and I sat down all four of us to join

hands round a heavy table. Madame Dante had announced that there would be incarnations. My head was content to drop forward on to the wood. I was asleep. The mother of the girl with geranium breasts hastened to waken me. Highly proud of her curative powers, she suggested that, for quite unsatisfying spiritualist ends, she should initiate me, but this was in any case impossible, since my military service, which I was then undergoing, required my return to Paris the very next day, and there I spoke to Breton of the adventure. He, Desnos, Eluard, Péret and a few others made it happen again at several gatherings, which have been described in *Wandering Footsteps*.

In the course of the study entitled *Enter the Mediums* which he has specially devoted to this phase of surrealist activity, Breton seeks to make the phase clearer by recalling how "in 1919, I had come to give my attention to the more or less incomplete sentences which on the approach of sleep, when one is quite alone, the mind is able to perceive, although it is impossible to say they have been predetermined."

Earlier Breton had noticed that "this word" (surrealism), "which we have not invented and which we could so easily have left in the vaguest of critical vocabularies, is employed by us with a precise meaning. We have agreed to refer by it to a certain psychic automatism which corresponds fairly well to the dream-state, a state of which it is by this time very difficult to fix the limits."

It is indeed as futile to fix the limits of one's states for the period of sleeping-fits as for any other time. *From Sleep to Simulation*—such even were the words with which I had intended to entitle these recollections and simultaneously to embrace the series of experiments which went on until Dali's recent considerations of paranoia (*The Visible Woman*) and

the essays on simulation of mental disease (Breton and Eluard, *The Immaculate Conception*).

*

In *Nadja*, Breton asked that "one of those who attended these countless séances should take the trouble to recall them impartially, describe them precisely, and set them in their proper context."

Accordingly, although my recollections must not in any way be interpreted as post-confessions, although I have not the slightest concealed intention or wish to discredit this or that genuineness, and do not even raise the matter of sincerity, for the good and simple reason that it cannot in this case be raised, owing precisely to the difficulties of fixing limits to our states and also to the difficulty of establishing who was responsible and who took this or that share in what was essentially a collective undertaking, I am trying to remember.... And I remember how before one of these séances a sentence came ready-made to the ears of my waking consciousness, "Mme. de Lamballe's dresses are being put up for auction."

I cannot bring myself to suspect that in the way this sentence persisted there merely lurked boyhood recollections of the waxworks in the Musée Grévin, of the disturbed marvelling in which I had once been plunged by the representation of scenes such as, precisely, on turning the corner of a corridor, that of Madame de Lamballe's freshly severed head being presented to Marie Antoinette.

One evening hands are being held round a table at Eluard's. I want to fall asleep before Desnos. I am afraid I shan't succeed. So then, in order to do something, I utter the sentence of which I have failed to rid myself the whole day long. The words are weighted, they bear me away. My head bangs

on the wood. I no longer exist. On waking, I am told what I have said. As my talk has not been so bad, I am delighted to learn what it has been from the lips of those who have listened to me, but only because I thus score over Desnos, my mediumistic competitor. Otherwise I should not care. I derive from each of these séances an exhausting satisfaction. At night-time my sleep is hollow. My wakings are not up to much. I have no sexual life all the while I am present at and joining in these séances. I don't want one. I don't even think of having one.

Despite the way in which Desnos and myself very quickly came to suspect each other, our suspicion changing into an enmity which I thought might lead Desnos to scratch out my eyes, for instance, just as, for that matter, I myself had given him a push which made him knock his head against a mantelpiece—when I meet Desnos on occasions other than those of the séances, these of course are the only thing we can talk about.

When I cannot stand any more, when I realize that I am going to lose my life or at least my head if I go on, I decide as a diversion to have an operation for appendicitis, though not without first having done my best so that Desnos (certainly delighted to have the field to himself) may get more strongly addicted and so go mad.

I have never stopped sighing for that time. As a sign of what I must have said, of what I did not hear myself say, I have more and more hated the sound of my voice. But when last week I was led to write these pages, the reading of an old number of *Littérature* containing the only one of my talks of that time which has been preserved, gave me a discomfort queerly spanning the whole intervening decade.

I recalled by way of confirmation this proverb which I had made up for my sole use, "An apple

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tree does not eat its apples. . . . An apple tree does not eat its apples. . . .” And yet what shall the solitary meditation tree, like other trees, bread, butter or cheese trees, do with its fruit? No meadow spreads out at its feet the carpet of its obligingness and the earth which refuses to take part in to-day’s fits of hunger will not, to-morrow either, receive the ripe fruit then perhaps ready to drop.

Concerning Desnos, concerning the dilemma which his case still is, to clear it up one needs only to quote these two passages from Breton :

“ I can still see Robert Desnos as he was in the days which those among us who have known them call the period of sleeping-fits. Then he would sleep, but he would also write, he would also speak. It is on some evening in my studio above the sky. ‘ Come in, come in to the Chat Noir,’ is being shouted outside. And Desnos goes on seeing what I only see as bit by bit he shows it to me. He takes on the personality of the most rare, the most unfixable, the most disappointing of living men—Marcel Duchamp. He has never seen him in the flesh. That in Duchamp which was reputed the most inimitable through a few mysterious puns (*Prose sélavay*) recurs in Desnos absolutely pure and suddenly takes on extraordinary body” (*Nadja*).

“ Since then, Desnos has been done a great disservice in this department by the very powers which for a while uplifted him and which he seems to be unaware are powers of darkness, and he has had the unfortunate notion of taking to action in real life, in which he was but a man more lonely and more destitute than his neighbour” (*Second Manifesto of Surrealism*).

And this was due, as Breton notices, to a lack of education, a lack of the philosophic spirit.

Through having for so long fixed the limits of states, the old analytical idolatry made it impossible to pass from one to another. A certain dualism which

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they failed to overcome—that is what threw out of surrealism not only Desnos but so many others, for, being dialectical in essence, surrealism intends to sacrifice neither dreaming to action nor action to dreaming, but instead to foster their synthesis.

Thought, even when least congealed, tends to be limited by the words expressing it, by the writing of which the down and the up strokes are the beats of consciousness itself.

An egg-shell hardens as soon as it is exposed to the air. This sclerosis it is attempted to pass off as something solid and definite must be perpetually condemned.

To draw frontiers between the different psychic states is no more justifiable than to draw them between geographical states. It is for surrealism to attack both, to condemn every kind of patriotism, even the patriotism of the unconscious.

MARCEL DUCHAMP

THE BRIDE STRIPPED BARE BY HER OWN BACHELORS

The following is an extract from a large, unpublished collection of notes by Marcel Duchamp which were intended to accompany and explain (as might an ideal exhibition-catalogue) the "verre" (painting on clear glass) known as The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Own Bachelors (1915-1918) and now in the collection of K. S. Dreier, New York.

The unique historical position of this work of art gives the following extract, by reason of the entirely new light it throws on its author's interests, considerable documentary value to surrealists.

A. B.

to separate the *ready-made* in quantity from the already found. The separating is an operation.

PREFACE¹

Given (1) the waterfall
(2) the lighting gas
we shall determine the conditions for an instantaneous position of Rest (or allegorical appearance) of a

¹ This word in the manuscript is ringed in red, and has the note, "perhaps nothing," written against it.

sequence [of a set] of small happenings appearing to necessitate one another under causal laws, *in order to extract the sign of relationship between*, on the one hand, this *position of Rest* (capable of all eccentricities), on the other, a *choice of Possibilities* available under these laws and at the same time determining them.

Or :

we shall determine the conditions under which may best be demonstrated [the] super-rapid position of Rest [the snapshot exposure] (= allegorical appearance) of a set . . . &c.

Or :

Given, in the dark, (1) the waterfall
(2) the lighting gas,

we shall determine ² (the conditions for) the super-rapid exposure (= allegorical appearance ³) of several collisions [acts of violence] appearing strictly to succeed one another—in accordance with certain causal laws ⁴—*in order to extract the sign of relationship between this snapshot exposure (capable of all eccentricities) on the one hand and the choice of the possibilities available under these laws on the other.*

Algebraic Comparison :

a *a* being the demonstration

b *b* „ „ possibilities

the ratio $\frac{a}{b}$ — is in no way given by a number *c*

² This has “we shall consider” written over it.

³ This has “allegorical reproduction” written over it.

⁴ There is a ring round these six words, and the note, “unnecessary.”

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$[\frac{a}{b}] = c$, but by the sign written between *a* and *b*.

As soon as *a* and *b* are “*knowns*,” they become new⁵ units and lose (their relative⁶ numerical or extensive) values; there remaining only the sign “—” written between them (*sign of relationship* or better of ..? *think this out*).

Given the lighting gas

PROGRESS (IMPROVEMENT)⁷ OF THE LIGHTING GAS UP TO THE LEVELS OF FLOW

Malic castings

By Eros matrix we understand the set of⁸ hollow uniforms or liveries designed [to contain the] for the lighting gas which takes 8 malic forms (constable, dragoon, &c.).⁹

The gas castings so obtained would hear the litanies sung by the trolley, the refrain of the whole celibate machine, but *they* will¹⁰ never be able to pass beyond¹¹ the Mask.¹² — They would have been¹³ as if enveloped all along their regrets by a mirror reflecting back to them their own complexity

⁵ This word has been written in.

⁶ Ditto.

⁷ These two words are written over “*JOURNEY*,” which has been deleted.

⁸ The figure “8” has been written in (This has later been changed to “9”).

⁹ 1. Constable; 2. Dragoon; 3. Policeman; 4. Priest; 5. Buttons; 6. Delivery boy of a large store; 7. Flunkey; 8. Undertaker’s man; 9. Station-master.

¹⁰ *Sic.*

¹¹ This word is ringed in red.

¹² Ditto.

¹³ *Sic.*

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to the point of their being hallucinated rather onanistically (Graveyard of the ¹⁴ uniforms or liveries).

Each of the 8 malic forms is built ¹⁵ above and below a common horizontal ¹⁶ plane, the plane of sex cutting them at the point of sex

Or :

Each of the 8 malic forms is cut by an imaginary horizontal plane in a point called the point of sex.

*

SUPERSCRIPTION

obtained with air currents acting as pistons
(explain briefly how these pistons are "prepared")

Then "put them into position" for a certain length of time (2 or 3 months),¹⁷ and allow them to leave their imprint in the character of [3] *nets* through which pass the hanged female's commands (commands having their alphabet and terms governed by the mutual positions of the 3 nets [a sort of triple "grill" across which the milky way brings—and is the conductor of—the command].

Next, remove them so that nothing remains but their firm imprint, i.e. the form ¹⁸ permitting any combination of letters sent across the above triple form, commands, orders, authorizations, &c., which are supposed to *join the hits and the splash*.

(Rendered into English by J. Bronowski)

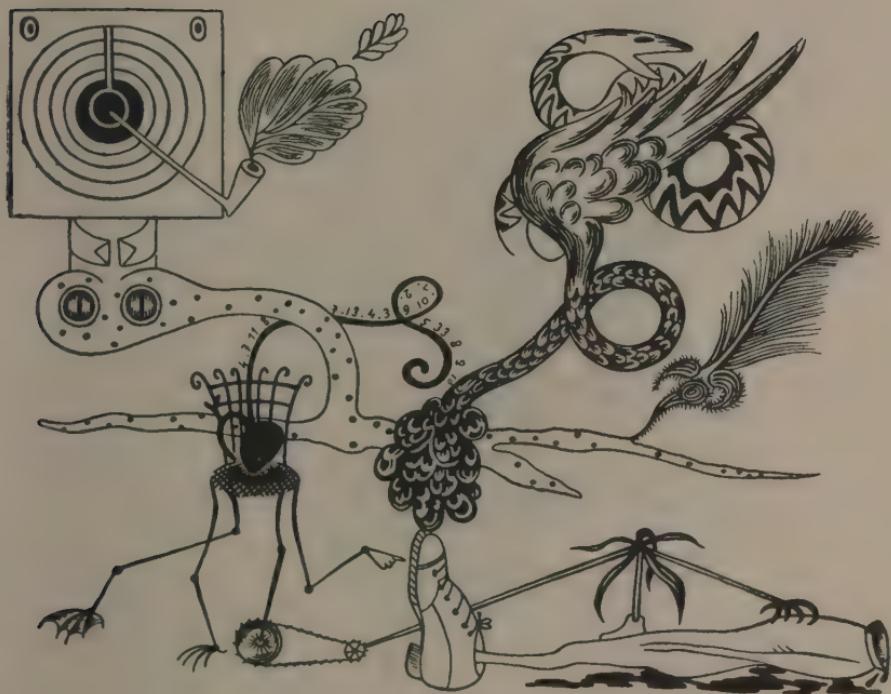
¹⁴ The figure "8" has been written in.

¹⁵ This word is ringed in red.

¹⁶ This word has been written in.

¹⁷ These words have been written in.

¹⁸ This word is underlined wavily.



Landscape ("Exquisite Corpse")
by Greta Knutson, Valentine Hugo, André Breton,
and Tristan Tzara.



Girl ("Exquisite Corpse") by *T. C., Valentine Hugo, and Paul Eluard.*

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THE OBJECT AS REVEALED IN SURREALIST EXPERIMENT

In my fancies, I like to take as the point of departure for surrealist experiments the title of a Max Ernst picture, "Revolution by Night." If in addition to how nearly quite dream-like and almost overwhelming these experiments were originally, one considers the nocturnal, the splendidly blinding, power of the word more or less summing up our future, the word "Revolution," nothing could be less subjective than this phrase, "Revolution by Night." After all, that the review which for several years recorded the experiments should have been called *The Surrealist Revolution* must be significant.

The years have modified the surrealist concept of the object most instructively, showing as it were in image how the surrealist view of the possibilities of action on the external world have been and may still be subject to change. In the early experiments with poetic solicitation, automatic writing and accounts of dreams, real or imaginary articles appeared to be endowed with a real life of their own. Every object was regarded as a disturbing and arbitrary "being" and was credited with having an existence entirely independent of the experimenters' activity. Thanks to the images obtained at "The Exquisite Corpse,"* this anthropomorphic stage con-

* The experiment known as "The Exquisite Corpse" was instigated by Breton. Several persons had to write successively words making up a sentence on a given model ("The exquisite | corpse | shall drink | the bubbling | wine"), each person being unaware of what word his neighbour might have had in mind. Or else several persons had to draw successively the lines making up a portrait or a scene, the second person being prevented from knowing what the first had drawn and the third prevented from knowing what the first and second had drawn, &c. In the realm of imagery, "The Exquisite Corpse" produced remarkably unexpected poetic associations, which could not have been obtained in any other known way, associations which still elude analysis and exceed in value as *fits* the rarest documents connected with mental disease.

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firmed the haunting notion of the metamorphoses—inanimate life, continuous presence of human images, &c.—while also displaying the regressive characters determining infantile stages. According to Feuerbach, “primitively the concept of the object is no other than the concept of a second self; thus in childhood every object is conceived as a being acting freely and arbitrarily.” As will be seen in the sequel, the objects come gradually to shed this arbitrary character as the surrealist experiments proceed; when produced in dreams, they grow adapted to the most contradictory forms of our wishes, and finally are subordinated—quite relatively, it is true—to the demands of our own action. But it must be insisted that before the object yields to this necessity, it undergoes a nocturnal and indeed subterranean phase.

*

The early surrealist experimenters found themselves plunged into the subterranean passages of “Revolution by Night,” the passages where *The Mysteries of New York* must have just been enacted; in fact, dream passages still identifiable to-day. They found themselves plunged in the post-mechanical open street, where the most beautiful and hallucinating iron vegetation sprouts those electric blooms still decorating in the “Modern Style” the entrances to the Paris Métro. There they were stricken with oblivion and, owing to the threat of unintended cataclysms, became highly developed automatic puppets such as men now risk becoming. All night long a few surrealists would gather round the big table used for experiments, their eyes protected and masked by thin though opaque mechanical slats on which the blinding curve of the convulsive graphs would appear intermittently in fleeting luminous signals, a delicate nickel apparatus like an astrolabe being fixed to their necks and fitted with animal membranes to record by interpenetration the apparition of each fresh poetic streak, their bodies being bound to their chairs by an ingenious system of straps, so that they could only move a hand in a certain way and the sinuous line was allowed to inscribe the appropriate white cylinders. Meanwhile their friends, holding their breath and biting their lower lips in concentrated attention, would lean over the recording apparatus and with dilated pupils await the expected but unknown movement, sentence or image.

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On the table, a few scientific instruments employed in a system of physics now forgotten or still to be elaborated, endowed the night with their different temperatures and the different smells of their delicate mechanisms, having been made a little feverish by the fresh and cool taste of the electricity. There was also a woman's bronze glove and several other perverted articles such as "that kind of white, irregular, varnished half-cylinder with apparently meaningless bulges and hollows," which is mentioned in *Nadja*, and further the cage Breton describes in *Wandering Footsteps* : "I have in mind the occasion when Marcel Duchamp got hold of some friends to show them a cage which seemed to have no birds in it, but to be half-full of lumps of sugar. He asked them to lift the cage and they were surprised at its heaviness. What they had taken for lumps of sugar were really small lumps of marble which at great expense Duchamp had had sawn up specially for the purpose. The trick in my opinion is no worse than any other, and I would even say that it is worth nearly all the tricks of art put together."

The semi-darkness of the first phase of surrealist experiment would disclose some headless dummies and a shape wrapped up and tied with string, the latter, being unidentifiable, having seemed very disturbing in one of Man Ray's photographs (already then this suggested other wrapped-up objects which one wanted to identify by touch but finally found could not be identified; their invention, however, came later). But how can one give the feel of the darkness which for us shrouded the whole business ? Only by mentioning the way the surrealists were strongly attracted by articles shining with their own light—in short, phosphorescent articles, in the proper or improper meaning of that word. These were a paper-cutter decorated with ears of wheat, casts of naked woman hung on the walls, and T-squares and biscuits forming a Chirico "metaphysical interior." It is of no importance that some of these things had been covered with the luminous paint used on watch faces to make the hands and figures shine in the dark. What matters is the way in which the experiments revealed the desire for the object, the tangible object. This desire was to get the object at all costs out of the dark and into the light, to bear it all winking and flickering into the full daylight. That is how the *dream objects* Breton called for in his *Introduction to a Speech on the Poverty of Reality* were first met with.

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He then said :

It should be realized that only our belief in a certain necessity prevents us from granting to poetic testimony the same credence we give, for example, to an explorer's story. Human fetishism is ready to try on the white topee or stroke the fur cap, but it displays quite another attitude when we come back full of our adventures. It absolutely requires to believe that what it is told about has *actually happened*. That is why I recently suggested that as far as is feasible one should manufacture some of the articles one meets only in dreams, articles which are as hard to justify on the ground of utility as on that of pleasure. Thus the other night during sleep, I found myself at an open-air market in the neighbourhood of Saint-Malo and came upon a rather unusual book. Its back consisted of a wooden gnome whose white Assyrian beard reached to his feet. Although the statuette was of a normal thickness, there was no difficulty in turning the book's pages of thick black wool. I hastened to buy it, and when I woke up I was sorry not to find it beside me. It would be comparatively easy to manufacture it. I want to have a few articles of the same kind made, as their effect would be distinctly puzzling and disturbing. Each time I present one of my books to some selected person, I shall add some such object to my gift.

For thereby I may assist in demolishing the thoroughly hateful trophies of the concrete and add to the discredit of "rational" people and things. I might include ingeniously constructed machines of no possible use, and also maps of immense towns such as can never arise while human beings remain as they are, but which nevertheless would put in their place the great capitals now extant and to be. We could also have ridiculous but perfectly articulated automatons, which, though not doing anything in a human way, would yet give us proper ideas of action.

It is at least possible that the poet's creations are destined very soon to assume such tangibility and so most queerly to displace the limits of the so-called real. I certainly think that one must no longer underrate the hallucinatory power of some images or the imaginative gift some men possess independently of their ability to recollect.

*

In the second phase of surrealist experiment, the experimenters displayed a desire to interfere. This intentional element tended more and more to tangible verification and emphasized the possibilities of a growing relation to everydayness.

It was in the light of this that the inquiry concerning the day-dream which love is pre-eminently (*The Surrealist Revolu-*

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lution, No. 12) took place. It is significant that the inquiry was undertaken at the very moment when surrealism was bestowing an ever more concrete meaning on the word "Revolution." In the circumstances, it cannot be denied that there is a dialectical potentiality in the fancy whereby the title of Max Ernst's picture, "Revolution by Night," is converted into "Revolution by Day" (such an apt motto for the second phase of surrealist experiment!), it being understood and emphasized that the day meant must be the exclusive day of dialectical materialism.

The proof of the existence of the desire to interfere and of the (ill-intentioned) intentional element just mentioned is provided in the overwhelming assertions which André Breton makes in the *Second Manifesto* (cf. pages 26 sqq. of the present number of *THIS QUARTER*) with the assurance natural to those who have become fully conscious of their mission to corrupt wickedly the foundations of the illegitimate, assertions which have necessarily had their effect on art and literature.

*

The awareness I was given in *The Visible Woman* that certain fulfilments were imminent led me to write, quite individually and personally, however: "I think the time is rapidly coming when it will be possible (simultaneously with automatism and other passive states) to systematize confusion thanks to a paranoiac and active process of thought, and so assist in discrediting completely the world of reality." This has led me in the course of things to manufacture quite recently some articles still undefined which, in the realm of action, provide the same conflicting opportunities as the most remote mediumistic messages provide in the realm of receptivity.

But the new phase of surrealist experiment is given a really vital character and as it were defined by the *simulations of mental diseases* which in *The Immaculate Conception*, André Breton and Paul Eluard have contrasted with the various poetic styles. Thanks to simulation in particular and images in general, we have been enabled, not only to establish communication between automatism and the road to the object, but also to regulate the system of interferences between them, automatism being thereby far from diminished

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but, as it were, liberated. Through the new relation thus established our eyes see the light of things in the external world.

Thereupon, however, we are seized with a new fear. Deprived of the company of our former habitual phantoms, which only too well ensured our peace of mind, we are led to regard the world of objects, the objective world, as the true and manifested content of a new dream.

The poet's drama as expressed by surrealism has been greatly aggravated. Here again as we have an entirely new fear. At the limit of the emerging cultivation of desire, we seem to be attracted by a new body, we perceive the existence of a thousand bodies of objects we feel we have forgotten. That the probable splitting of the personality is due to loss of memory is suggested by Feuerbach's conception of the object as being primitively only the concept of second self, all the more so that Feuerbach adds, "The concept of the object is usually produced with the help of the 'you' which is the 'objective self'." Accordingly it must be the "you" which acts as "medium of communication," and it may be asked if what at the present moment haunts surrealism is not the possible body which can be incarnated in this communication. The way in which the new surrealist *fear* assumes the shape, the light and the appearance of the terrifying body the "objective self" should be compels us to think so. This view is further supported by the fact that André Breton's next book, amounting to a third surrealist manifesto, will be entitled with the clarity of a magnetized meteor, a talisman-meteor, *The Communicating Vessels*.

*

I have recently invited the surrealists to consider an experimental scheme of which the definite development would have to be undertaken collectively. As it is still individual, unsystematized, and merely suggestive, it is only put forward at present as a starting-point.

1°. *The Transcription of Reveries.*

2°. *Experiment Regarding the Irrational Acquaintance of Things:* Intuitive and very quick answers have to be given to a single and very complex series of questions about known and unknown articles

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such as a rocking-chair, a piece of soap, &c. One must say concerning one of these articles whether it is :

Of day or night,
Paternal or maternal,
Incestuous or not incestuous,
Favourable to love,
Subject to transformation,

Where it lies when we shut our eyes (in front or behind us, or on our left or our right, far off or near, &c.),

What happens to it if it is put in urine, vinegar, &c., &c.

3°. Experiment Concerning Objective Perception : Each of the experimenters is given an alarm-watch which will go off at a time he must not know. Having this watch in his pocket, he carries on as usual and at the very instant the alarm goes off he must note where he is and what most strikingly impinges on his senses (of sight, hearing, smell and touch). From an analysis of the various notes so made, it can be seen to what extent objective perception depends upon imaginative representation (the causal factor, astrological influence, frequency, the element of coincidence, the possibility of the result's symbolical interpretation in the light of dreams, &c.). One might find, for instance, that at five o'clock elongated shapes and perfumes were frequent, at eight o'clock hard shapes and purely phototypical images.

4°. Collective Study of Phenomenology in subjects seeming at all times to have the utmost surrealist opportuneness. The method which can be most generally and simply employed is modelled on the method of analysis in Aurel Kolnai's phenomenology of repugnance. By means of this analysis one may discover the objective laws applicable scientifically in fields hitherto regarded as vague, fluctuating and capricious. It would in my opinion be of special interest to surrealism for such a study to bear on *fancies* and on *caprice*. They could be carried out almost entirely as polemical inquiries, needing merely to be completed by analysis and co-ordination.

5°. Automatic Sculpture : At every meeting for polemics or experiment let every person be supplied with a fixed quantity of malleable material to be dealt with automatically. The shapes thus made, together with each maker's notes (of the time and conditions of production), are later collected and analysed. The series of questions regarding the irrational acquaintance of things (cf. Proposal 2 above) might be used.

6°. Oral Description of Articles perceived only by touch. The subject is blindfolded and describes by touching it some ordinary

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or specially manufactured article, and the record of each description is compared with the photograph of the article in question.

8°. *Making of Articles* on the strength of descriptions obtained according to the preceding Proposal. Let the articles be photographed and compared with the original articles described.

9°. *Examination of Certain Actions* liable owing to their irrationality to produce deep currents of demoralization and cause serious conflicts in interpretation and practice, e.g. :

(a) Causing in some way any little old woman to come along and then pulling out one of her teeth,

(b) Having a colossal loaf (fifteen yards long) baked and left early one morning in a public square, the public's reaction and everything of the kind until the exhaustion of the conflict to be noted.

10°. *Inscription of Words on Articles*, the exact words to be decided upon. At the time of *Calligrammes* the typographical arrangement was made to suit the form of articles, which was one way of fitting the shapes of articles to the writing. Here I am proposing that the writing should be made to take the shape of the articles and that one should write directly on articles. There is not the slightest doubt that specific novelties would arise through the *direct* contact with the object, from this so very material and novel unifying of thought with the object—the novel and continuous flowering of fetishist "desires to verify" and the novel and constant sense of responsibility. Surely the poetry written on fans, tombs, monuments, &c., has a very particular, a very clearly distinct, style? I don't want to exaggerate the importance of such precedents or of the realist error to which they give rise. Of course I am not thinking of occasional poems, but, on the contrary, of writings devoid of any obvious or intentional relation to the object on which they are read. Thus writing would exceed the limits of "inscription" and entirely cover over the complex, tangible and concrete shapes of things.

Such writing could be on an egg or on a roughly cut slice of bread. I dream of a mysterious manuscript written in white ink and completely covering the strange, firm surfaces of a brand-new Rolls-Royce. Let the privilege of the prophets of old be conferred on every one: let every one be able to read from things.

In my opinion this writing on things, this material devouring of things by writing, is enough in itself to show how far we have travelled since Cubism. No doubt, we became accustomed during the Cubist period to seeing things assume the most abstract intellectual shapes; lutes, pipes, jam-pots, and bottles were seeking to take the form of the Kantian "thing in itself," supposedly invisible behind

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the quite recent disturbances of appearance and phenomena. In *Caligrammes* (the symptomatic value of which has not yet been realized) it was indeed the shapes of things which were seeking to take the very form of writing. Nevertheless one must insist that although this attitude is a relative step forward towards the concrete, it is still on the contemplative and theoretical plane. The object's action is allowed to influence, but there is no attempt at acting on the object. On the other hand, this principle of action and of practical and concrete taking part is what presides unceasingly over the surrealist experiments and it is our submission to this principle which leads us to bring into being "objects that operate symbolically," objects which fulfil the necessity of being open to action by our own hands and moved about by our own wishes.*

But our need of taking an active part in the existence of these things and our yearning to form *a whole* with them are shown to be emphatically material through our sudden consciousness of a *new hunger* we are suffering from. As we think it over, we find suddenly that it does not seem enough to devour things with our eyes and our anxiety to join actively and effectively in their existence brings us to want to *eat them*.

The persistent appearance of eatables in the first surrealist things painted by Chirico—crescents, macaroons, and biscuits finding a place among complex constructions of T-squares and other utensils not to be catalogued—is not

* Typical Surrealist Objects Operating Symbolically :

Article by Giacometti.—A wooden bowl, having a feminine depression is suspended by means of a fine fiddle-string over a crescent, one tip of which just touches the cavity. The spectator finds himself instinctively compelled to slide the bowl up and down over the tip, but the fiddle-string is not long enough for him to do so more than a little.

Article by Valentine Hugo.—Two hands, one white-gloved, the other red, and both having ermine cuffs, are placed on a green roulette cloth from which the last four numbers have been removed. The gloved hand is palm upwards and holds between thumb and forefinger (its only movable fingers) a die. All the fingers of the red hand are movable and this hand is made to seize the other. Its forefinger being put inside the glove's opening which it raises slightly. The two hands are enmeshed in white threads like gossamer which are fastened to the roulette cloth with red- and white-topped drawing pins in a mixed arrangement.

Article by André Breton.—An earthenware receptacle filled with tobacco on which are two long pink sugared almonds is placed on a little bicycle saddle. A polished wooden globe which can revolve in the axis of the saddle causes, when it moves, the end of this saddle to come into contact with two orange-coloured celluloid antennae. The sphere is connected by means of two arms of the same material with an hour-glass lying horizontally (so that the sand does not move) and with a bicycle bell intended to ring when a green sugared almond is slung into the axis by means of a catapult behind the saddle. The whole affair is mounted on a board covered with woodland vegetation which leaves exposed here and there a paving of percussion caps, and in one corner of the board, more thickly covered with leaves than the rest, there stands a small sculptured alabaster book, the cover of which is ornamented with a glazed photograph of the Tower

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more striking in this respect than the appearance in the public squares, which his pictures are, of certain pairs of artichokes or clusters of bananas which, thanks to the exceptional co-operation of circumstances, form on their own, and without any apparent modification, actual surrealist articles.

But the predominance of eatables or things that can be ingested is disclosed to analysis in almost all the present surrealist articles (sugared almonds, tobacco, coarse salt in Breton's; medical tablets in Gala's; milk, bread, chocolate, excrement and fried eggs in mine; sausage in Man Ray's; light lager in Crevel's). The article I find most symptomatic from this point of view—and this precisely because of the complex indirectness—is Paul Eluard's, although in his there is an apparently not very edible element, a taper. Wax, however, is not only one of the most malleable substances, and therefore very strongly invites one to act upon it, but also wax used to be eaten in former times, as we learn from certain eastern tales; and further from reading certain Catalan tales of the Middle Ages, it may be seen that wax was used in magic to bring about metamorphoses and the fulfilment of wishes. As is well-known, wax was almost the only material which was employed in the making of sorcery effigies which were pricked with pins, this allowing us to suppose that they are the true precursors of articles operating symbolically. Moreover, the meaning of its con-substantiality with honey has to be seen in the fact that honey is much used in magic for erotic purposes. Here, then, the taper very likely plays the part of an intestinal morphological metaphor. Finally, by extension, the notion of eating

of Pisa, and near this one finds, by moving the leaves, a cap which is the only one to have gone off: it is under the hoof of a doe.

Article by Gala Eluard.—There are two oscillating and curved metal antennae.

At each end of them are two sponges, one in metal, the other real, and they are breast-shaped, the dugs being represented by red-painted little bones. When the antennae are given a push, the sponges come just in touch, one with flour in a bowl, the other with the bristle tips of a metal brush.

The bowl is placed in a sloping box containing other things which correspond to additional representations. There is a stretched red elastic membrane, which vibrates for a long time on the slightest touch, and a small flexible black spiral looking like a wedge hangs in a little red cage. A deal paint-brush and a chemist's glass tube divide the box into compartments.

Article by Salvador Dali.—Inside a woman's shoe is placed a glass of warm milk in the centre of a soft paste coloured to look like excrement.

A lump of sugar on which there is a drawing of the shoe has to be dipped in the milk, so that the dissolving of the sugar, and consequently of the image of the shoe, may be watched. Several extras (pubic hairs glued to a lump of sugar, an erotic little photograph, &c.) make up the article, which has to be accompanied by a box of spare sugar and a special spoon used for stirring leaden pellets inside the shoe.

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wax survives nowadays in a stereotyped process : at séances of theatrical hypnotism and conjuring which display certain magical survivals, it is quite common to see candles swallowed. In the same way also, the edible meaning of one of Man Ray's recent articles would be revealed—an article in the middle of which a candle only has to be lit for it to set fire to several elements (a horse's tale, strings, a hoop) and cause the collapse of the whole. If one takes into account that the perception of a smell is equivalent in the phenomenology of repugnance to the perception of the taste the thing which smells may have, so that the intentional element, which is the burning of the article, may be interpreted as a roundabout desire to eat it (and so obtain its smell and even its ingestible smoke), one sees that burning a thing is equivalent, *inter alia*, to making it edible.

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To sum up, the surrealist object has undergone four phases so far :

- 1°. The object exists outside us, without our taking part in it (anthropomorphic articles);
- 2°. The object assumes the immovable shape of desire and acts upon our contemplation (dream-state articles);
- 3°. The object is movable and such that it can be acted upon (articles operating symbolically);
- 4°. The object tends to bring about our fusion with it and makes us pursue the formation of a unity with it (hunger for an article and edible articles).

THIS QUARTER

** There will be published in later issues of *THIS QUARTER* :

A Poem by *A. L. Rowse*;
Stories, by *Neville Brand, Alfred H. Mendes,*
Ira V. Morris, and Marion Ward.